

DANTE STUDIES

with the Annual Report
of the Dante Society



CXXX

2012

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Edited by
RICHARD LANSING

Published for
The Dante Society of America, Incorporated
Cambridge, Massachusetts
by
Fordham University Press
Bronx, New York
2012

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Dante Studies, formerly the *Annual Report of the Dante Society*, is published annually. All correspondence regarding membership in the Dante Society should be addressed to The Dante Society of America, P.O. Box 1558, Arlington, MA 02474-0023; e-mail: dsa@dantesociety.org. Inquiries about *subscriptions* to the journal and/or *back orders* should be sent to Margaret Noonan, Business Manager, Fordham University Press, University Box L, Bronx, NY 10458-5172; e-mail: mnoonan@fordham.edu. *Submissions* to the journal from members of the Society should be addressed to Richard Lansing, Editor, *Dante Studies*, by e-mail attachment *only* (preferably in Microsoft Word): lansing@brandeis.edu. A style sheet with guidelines for manuscript format and style appears at the end of this issue and can also be found on our Web site at www.dantesociety.org | Publications | Dante Studies.

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Library of Congress catalog card number: 15-2183

ISSN 0070-2862

Printed in the United States of America

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“Sì ch’a nulla, fendendo, facea male”:
Dante’s Griffin and Florentine Civic
Ritual (*Purgatorio* 29.109–11)

DAVID RUZICKA

Dante’s *grifon*, the hybrid beast that seems strangely to be both central and peripheral to the symbolic economy of the Earthly Paradise cantos, has attracted a certain degree of controversy, although this has been a relatively recent phenomenon. The interpretation offered by the Trecento commentators, who viewed the “*doppia fiera*” as a representation of Christ, went unchallenged until the nineteenth century and remains still the *opinio communis*.¹ Given both the enduring strength of this consensus and the intensity with which scholars have engaged with the question of the griffin, the subtlety and complexity of the arguments advanced both for and against the traditional reading, it is curious that there remains still one aspect of the “animal binato” that has been almost entirely ignored. No convincing gloss has yet been advanced for lines 109–11 of Canto 29, in which Dante offers his reader the dense and perplexing image of the griffin’s golden wings passing through the streamers of brightly colored air above. The aim of this essay is to suggest a possible explanation for these baffling lines, and thus to expore the interconnection between the *grifon* and the colored bands of air described at lines 75–78. In part, the significance of this undertaking is that, although there is some measure of controversy with regard to the griffin itself, there has been virtually no disagreement over the significance of the other components of the mystical procession. As Corrado Calenda has remarked, of all the many encoded images in Canto 29, the *grifon* stands out as the sole detail over which it is possible still to engage in some

kind of debate.² Yet this isolation might itself be part of the problem. If the standard interpretation of the *grifon* does not really work, then perhaps to some extent this is because some other element in Dante's rich tapestry of signs has been misconstrued. And if we want to construct an alternative reading, then we will have to relinquish some of the assumptions that have been made about the visual framework that surrounds the *grifon*.

The lines I shall focus on, initially at least, constitute the first of the two tercets devoted to the griffin:

Esso tendeva in sù l'una e l'altra ale
tra la mezzana e le tre e tre liste,
sì ch'a nulla, fendendo, facea male.
Tanto salivan che non eran viste;
le membra d'oro avea quant' era uccello,
e bianche l'altre, di vermiglio miste.
Purg. 29.109–14

Before we can begin to consider the image of the gilded wings, however, I need briefly to outline an assumption of my own regarding the second of the two tercets. Traditionally, the conjunction of the golden aquiline component of the *grifon* and its vermillion leonine body have been read as a symbolic representation of the mystical union of the divine and human aspects of Christ. The experiment I want to pursue here is about what might happen if we put the Trecento gloss to one side for a moment and sought for ways to decode the *grifon* as a political emblem. That is, what kinds of hermeneutic possibilities are opened up if we view the eagle and the lion as allusions, respectively, to the heraldry of the empire and the Florentine republic?

This is not an entirely unreasonable project. For a start, a golden eagle in Dante, one might argue, invariably refers to the Roman Empire: the “segno / che fè i Romani al mondo reverendi” (*Par.* 19.101–2).³ And if we were looking for another political entity to balance the imperial emblem, then the Florentine Republic is surely as good a candidate as any. The colors of the Florentine flag were, after all, white and vermillion, as Dante reminds us at the end of *Paradiso* 16; and the commune had adopted the lion—the ‘Marzocco’—as a mascot symbolizing its sovereignty and military prowess.⁴

In some respects, then, this imperial-Florentine reading is an obvious gloss to the “doppia fera.” It also occurs in Peter Armour's monograph

of 1989, though only parenthetically as one of the numerous elements encompassed by his vision of the *grifon* as a "polysemous and even prismatic" image.⁵ For Armour, the primary reference is to the union of the *imperium* and the civic government of the Roman *popolo*.⁶ Yet, because the conception of imperial authority embodied by the griffin is "republican and popular," Dante's vision of an "ideal Rome" (71) is also bound up with the ideology of popular sovereignty so crucial to the civic culture of the Italian city-states in the late thirteenth century. Hence, besides their Roman connotations, the colors and zoological symbolism of the *grifon* might also "stand for the union of a leonine Guelph people (with its standard of white and red) with the eagle of the Empire" (167). Apart from this brief reference, however, Armour makes very little attempt to pursue the possibility that Dante's image might represent a merging of the Florentine commune and imperial authority, and never lets the idea distract from his principal concern to show that the griffin is a symbol of a divinely conceived "Rome."

Clearly, there is a certain appeal to the idea that, through the visual cipher of the *grifon*, Dante adumbrates a utopian vision of a world in which the commune of Florence and the Empire have come together in a symbiotic union. Most immediately, the griffin would come to the fore as a means of outlining what Dante believed was the solution to the political crisis besetting European civilization. And for the poet himself, of course, it would also represent the new political dispensation necessary to heal the personal catastrophe of his own exile. We would, moreover, have to revise our sense of the emphases of Dante's political thought. For what we wind up with is a focus not so much upon the Empire as upon a process of integration which, one might just about claim, foreshadows the federation of autonomous polities that is modern Europe.

The relevance of the intersection of the wings and the *liste* to all this is as follows. Dante's division of the air-ribbons into two groups of three on either side of a central *lista* (the "mezzana"), I shall suggest, can be read as an allusion to the constitution of the Florentine governing executive, which from the early 1290s comprised six priors and an official known as the standardbearer of justice (*gonfaloniere della giustizia*). Subsequently, the argument will focus on Dante's use of the term *ostendali* and the vision this word conjures of the banners carried through the streets of Florence in the numerous processions so central to the political culture of the commune. Returning at last to the question behind my title, I shall propose

that the function of line 111 is to convey, diagrammatically, the notion that the union of empire and city-state will in no way prove injurious to the autonomy of local political institutions. Contrary to Guelph fears, to submit to imperial authority poses no threat to the Florentine priorate. And Dante, it will be recalled, knew only too well how bitter might be the consequences of the subversion of civic rule by foreign powers.

Plainly, then, this is a reading which seeks to contextualize the *grifon* within the sociohistorical realities of Dante's Florence around the turn of the thirteenth century. And this sets the interpretation off from the standard approach with its contrasting emphasis on the more universal cultural framework of theology and scriptural exegesis. Until very recently, critics have shown little inclination to explore the relevance to the *Commedia* of the sociopolitical context of the commune in which its author lived almost two thirds of his life. The last few years, however, have seen the publication of monographs by Claire Honess and Catherine Keen on the importance to Dante both of Florence and, more generally, of the idea of the city and of citizenship.⁷ No less welcome is Justin Steinberg's fascinating study of manuscript production and the implications this has for our perception of the predominantly urban and mercantile context in which Dante's poetry was composed and received. Of especial relevance here to my own thesis is Steinberg's appreciation of the degree to which Dantisti have all but ignored the work of social historians on the civic political culture of Florence in the period of the class struggle between the *popolo* and the *magnati*.⁸ These studies on the urban and sociopolitical origins of Dante's writing have begun to fill the lacunae highlighted by Teodolinda Barolini in her recent exhortation to "only historicize." That is, our endeavor should henceforth be to construe Dante's thought not only in relation to the "high culture" with which scholarship has traditionally been concerned but also by taking account of the material culture so richly documented in the *Commedia*.⁹

The Status Quaestionis

That there is hermeneutical work to be done in lines 109–11 will be obvious to any reader. Among the questions to which commentators have failed thus far to supply adequate answers are the following. What do the

liste symbolize? Why are there seven? Why are they colored like a rainbow? Why do the griffin's wings pass on either side of the central band? Why are we told that the wings do not damage the *liste*?

Since the *liste* are presented as traces in the air left by the flames atop the candelabra, it is to this device, perceived initially by the Dante-character as "sette alberi d'oro" (line 43), that we must first turn our attention. On the basis of a passage in Revelation 4, Pietro Alighieri interpreted the "candelabri" as the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit ("septem dona spiritus sancti");¹⁰ and the majority of commentators followed suit, linking the *liste* in various ways with the Holy Spirit.¹¹ The other major strand in the Trecento tradition views the *liste* as the seven sacraments.¹² In the eighteenth century, however, Baldassare Lombardi objects to this reading because chronologically it made no sense for the sacraments to precede the advent of Christ, symbolized by the *grifon*.¹³ Scartazzini concurred that it was inconsistent with the order of the procession to read the *liste* as the sacraments. Both the candelabra and the *liste* would have to "figurar cosa che fu già ai tempi del vecchio Testamento, anzi sin dal principio del mondo." Furthermore, it was also inadmissible to view the sacraments as an immediate effect of the sevenfold power of the Holy Spirit. If the candelabri are the "septem spiritus Dei" of Revelation 4:5, in other words "lo Spirito Santo *uno* nella sua essenza," then the *liste* must represent "gli effetti immediati dello Spirito Santo, i quali altro non sono che il settemplice suo dono," the point being that these are not seven gifts but one sevenfold gift because the "doni non vanno disgiunti."¹⁴

Some commentators have seen no necessity to distinguish between the significance of the candelabra and that of the *liste*, and simply read both as symbols of the seven gifts of the Spirit.¹⁵ In the modern era, there are those who, like Porena, have sought to maintain a distinction, reading the *liste* as the seven gifts of Spirit emanating from the "settemplice spirito di Dio figurato nei sette candelabri."¹⁶ But most editions simply regard the *liste* as symbolizing the seven gifts of the Spirit.¹⁷ At times these assertions are hedged by the addition of the phrase "in all probability."¹⁸ Only Chimenz, however, concedes that we cannot be confident of any of the interpretations so far advanced.¹⁹

Girding himself to solve the puzzle posed by lines 109–11, Scartazzini complained, not unjustifiably, that "i più non se ne curano." In fact, the Dartmouth database reveals that six commentaries ignore the *terzina*

altogether;²⁰ while a further eleven attempt nothing beyond a paraphrase.²¹ The Ottimo's gnomic definition of "la mezzana lista" as "termine tra la divinitade e l'umanitade in Cristo" is no more illuminating than the glosses appended by the Anonymus Lombardus (1325[?]) and Benvenuto da Imola (1375–80), for both of whom the point is that the Christ-griffin does not "ruin" or "disturb" any of the seven sacraments symbolized by the *liste*.²² Among the Trecento commentators it is Francesco da Buti (1385–95) who offers the most sustained treatment of the question, contriving a complex theological scheme whereby the central band, representing the sacrament of the eucharist, is framed by justice and mercy, symbolized by the wings. While the airstreamers on the right side are glossed as confirmation, baptism and holy orders, which derive from divine justice, those on the left represent penance, extreme unction and matrimony, which depend on God's mercy. The wings serve to maintain this distinction between the sacraments in terms of their dependence either on God's justice or on his mercy. Their function is thus essentially didactic. They prevent us committing the doctrinal error of believing, for example, that penance has anything to do with God's justice when it is properly an effect of his mercy. If the wings are said to do no damage to the *liste* this is simply to demonstrate that the distinction established between the two groups of sacraments is to be seen as firm and fast. Even if one objects that justice and mercy are manifest in all of God's works, the division still holds because it can be argued that in each of the two categories justice or mercy takes precedence over, but does not exclude, the other. Dante's intention is merely to stress that in the sacraments on the right justice predominates, just as mercy does in the case of the three sacraments on the opposite side.²³ The problem with this interpretation, however, is the claim that it is the conceptual division which escapes damage and not the *liste* themselves, which is what line 111 actually seems to say. Nonetheless, Buti's gloss was adopted both by Landino (1481) and by Vellutello (1544), the latter adding, bafflingly, that neither divine justice nor mercy ever prevent the operation of the seven sacraments ("perchè né la giustitia, né la mise decentring ricordia divina, impedisce mai i sette sacramenti"). In the late eighteenth century, Landino is taken to task by Lombardi (1791–92), who cites the authority of Peter Lombard in the Sentences (4, dist. 2) to insist that no theologian has ever assigned the fourth place in the seven sacraments to the eucharist, this always being reserved for penitence.²⁴ In Lombardi's view, the *liste* symbolize the seven

gifts of the holy spirit, and hence the "mezzana" must allude to the fourth gift, which is fortitude. This gloss more or less does for the notion that the *liste* represent the sacraments, though Lombardi ignores the question of the "male" in line 111. The identification of the wings with justice and mercy, however, will continue to enjoy a certain measure of success, partly because of an influential attempt in the late nineteenth century to link Dante's image with passages from the Psalms.²⁵ The gloss will persist at least until the 1980s.²⁶ That there is a fundamental problem with this approach, however, is evident from the signal failure of these commentators to explain convincingly either why the wings divide the *liste* as they do or why they do no damage to them. For John Carroll (1904), Dante's image signifies that "the justice and mercy of God in the Incarnation enfold the gift of Fortitude," and thus "find themselves in harmony with the remaining gifts . . . no one is injured, all co-operate harmoniously."²⁷ He is followed by Ernesto Trucchi (1936), who suggests that the crucifixion "fu opera di misericordia senza nuocere a giustizia, e opera di giustizia senza nuocere a misericordia." But this gets us nowhere because the problem is not to explain why the wings do not damage *each other* but why they do not harm the *liste*.

In the modern era, the prevailing tendency has been to view the *liste* as the seven gifts of the spirit and the griffin's wings as representing Christ's divinity. This seems better than Buti and Landino's arbitrary allegorization of the wings as justice and mercy, but it only perpetuates the fundamental problem. For if both the *liste* and the wings are emanations of the divinity, then one has to explain why Dante tells us that, as Serravalle (1416–17) put it, the latter "non offendebant divinitatem." Why would divinity turn against itself? Raffaello Andreoli (1856) tried to get around this conundrum by distorting the sense of "facea male." The allegory, he proposed, signals that the divinity of Christ, symbolized by the wings, does not render superfluous to the Church any of the gifts of the Spirit.²⁸ In Scartazzini's view, the point Dante desires to make in line 111 is that Christ does nothing to inhibit the influence of the Holy Spirit, nor does he usurp its place, for the two powers rather "operano unanimemente [*sic*] ed armonicamente nella Chiesa," a notion he finds reflected in what he sees as "similar" assertions in the New Testament (John 5:17 and 10:30). He is forced to concede, however, that in both passages Christ is speaking of the Father and the Son rather than of the Son and the Spirit. Thus, even Scartazzini finds himself citing Scriptural passages which do not really

corroborate his thesis. Nor, in the end, has he managed any better than Andreoli to avoid traducing the very straightforward sense of Dante's "facea male."

For the most part, commentators are reduced to searching for different ways of expressing the same general notion of a harmonious interrelation between Christ and the Holy Spirit. The wisdom of Jesus is "in intrinseca fusione con lo Spirito Santo."²⁹ There is "armonia perfetta fra l'opera dello Spirito Santo e quella di Cristo."³⁰ The two entities do not obstruct one another but are integrated, united in Christ's work of redemption.³¹ To say this, though, is to assert that God does not set out to wreck his own designs. In a writer as incisive as Dante, this is, to say the least, a disappointingly redundant statement. As Manfredi Porena (1946–48) points out, "quello che parrebbe ovvio, che Cristo non nuoce ai doni dello Spirito Santo, è tanto ovvio da essere ridicolo il dirlo." There is not much that one can say to counter this objection. But the commentary tradition, convinced that the griffin's wings symbolize Christ's divinity and the *liste* the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, has argued itself into a corner. Small wonder, then, that some modern commentators resign themselves to defeat. Porena, Chimenz and Bosco and Reggio, while acknowledging that some symbolic relationship is clearly at stake, all confess to being uncertain as to what it might be.³² While Paolo Brezzi is prepared to contemplate that Dante, without any particular doctrinal purpose, might simply be indulging a penchant for meticulous description.³³

The critical literature on the griffin is, if anything, more evasive than the commentary tradition when it comes to lines 109–11. Neither Hardie nor Dronke has any time for the first of the griffin *terzine*. Peter Armour's three-hundred-page monograph on the griffin contains only a single, rather vague, sentence on the intersection of the wings and the air-streamers.³⁴ Cristaldi's concentration on the apophatic tradition, though fascinating, means that he devotes just one brief paragraph to the colors of the griffin and nothing at all to the question of the intersection of the wings and the *liste*.³⁵ Even Diana Modesto's essay on the griffin, unique in its focus on the colored bands of air, has next to nothing to say about the first tercet.³⁶ For all the attention that these lines have received, one feels in the end that Dante may as well not have written them.

That said, though, there are several recent studies that give some thought at least to the symbolic connection between the *liste* and the *grifon*, and to the relationship between the disparate components of the

procession. The foremost of these, Lino Pertile's monograph on the Earthly Paradise, does so obliquely through its exploration of the exegetical context surrounding Dante's *candelabra*, the source of the seven airstreamers. In the course of a sophisticated intertextual argument, Pertile links the fifth verse of Revelation 4, where the "septem lampades ar dentes" were glossed as representing the "septem spiritus Dei," to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit referred to by Isaiah (11:2–3), a text recalled by Dante in the *Convivio* (4.21.11). The first verse of this chapter of Isaiah, which refers to the "virga de radice Iesse et flos de radice eius," was viewed by the exegetical tradition as alluding to the Virgin and Christ. Through an examination of the literary and iconographic tradition that conceived the tree of Jesse as a seven-branched candelabra, Pertile argues convincingly that the "candelabra" of lines 43–54 anticipates the theme of the redemption embodied in the Christ-griffin.³⁷ No less important a contribution to our understanding of Dante's textual sources is to be found in Simone Marchesi's discussion of the symbolism of the candelabra in the context of the second book of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*. Here the sequence of Augustine's argument is adduced to explain why, in Dante's masque, the gifts of the Holy Spirit should have been elected as the outliers of the procession. Emphasizing the "eminently . . . textual" nature of Dante's *corteo*, Marchesi draws attention to a structural parallel whereby Dante gives expression to Augustine's conviction that it is through the gifts of the Holy Spirit that scriptural hermeneutics must proceed, as the exegete ascends a ladder of spiritual stages corresponding to the order of the *septem dona*. Just as, in *De doctrina christiana*, this discussion is followed immediately by a survey of the books of the Bible, so in Canto 29 the candelabra functions as "battistrada" to the "ventiquattro seniori," "quattro animali" and other allegorical figures representing the books of the Old and New Testaments.³⁸ The intertextual arguments presented by Pertile and Marchesi are cogent and persuasive. Yet neither of these studies makes any reference to lines 109–11. There is nothing to explain why Dante is at pains to inform us that the wings do not harm the airstreamers generated by the *candelabra* nor why they are divided into the pattern described in line 110. Nor, for that matter, do the scriptural and exegetical intertexts help us to understand why the air ribbons are multi-colored.

Most of what we need to know to decode the griffin, it seems reasonable to assume, is contained in the six lines that immediately follow the

creature's first appearance at line 108. To be sure, the phrase "una persona in due nature" (*Purg.* 31.81) two cantos later is generally viewed as an indispensable signpost to the Christological meaning. But no commentary gives the impression that one could not construct an interpretation of the griffin from the initial sequence in Canto 29. If this is indeed the case, then it is all the more perplexing that the vast majority of scholars choose to disregard half of this information. It is difficult to parse a sentence when you only want to look at the second half of it. The words of explanation devoted to the second tercet far outweigh those which deal with the first. Indeed, the respective critical responses that the two *terzine* have met with could hardly be more different. While a firm consensus has gathered around the second, the first has been virtually ignored. This lack of engagement has served to suppress the realization that lines 109–11 are among some of the most intractable lines in the *Commedia*. Ultimately, though, not only should our readings of both *terzine* contribute to our understanding of the griffin, but the two halves of the sequence should illuminate one another. Given that the air-streamers and the wings are literally interwoven, we might reasonably expect the meanings encoded in the two tercets to be closely connected, perhaps even to the extent that if our interpretation of the one fails to cast light on the other, then we ought to wonder if we have not got something wrong.

One might begin by asking why Dante would have devised something as elaborate and eccentric as the colored canopy of striated air, if all it was to signify was the kind of theological meaning ascribed to it by the commentary tradition. It is unthinkable that so artificial a contrivance could be unimportant in the symbolic economy of this segment of the poem.³⁹ That, on the contrary, it is likely to be of crucial significance is suggested not least by the aesthetic risk Dante is prepared to run by allowing the strangeness and sheer awkwardness of such an image into his poem at this point. Surely, the bizarre visual moment constituted by these lines must possess a symbolic value commensurate with such an investment of creative energy if the canto is to retain its coherence and artistic integrity? In this respect, Cristaldi makes the interesting point that Dante's depiction in line 112 of the wings thrusting skyward as far as his eyes could see has a decentering effect. Unlike the medieval bestiary writers, Dante does not enter into the minutiae of an anatomical description, but is seemingly distracted by a peripheral detail which gets blown up out of all proportion to its relevance. For Cristaldi, the image of the griffin's wings extending

out of sight is an echo of the prophetic style of writers such as Ezekiel or John. The result, in Dante as in the Biblical visionaries, is a form of "dissonance" which translates into images the Pauline theology of the inexpressible immensity of the divinity.⁴⁰ This sense of Dante's initial treatment of the griffin as "decentred" and "dissonant" might also, however, give rise to the realization that these "dettagli," with which scholars seem to be so surprisingly unconcerned, are in fact of disproportionate importance.

There is one other quality of the poetry here that ought to alert us to the likelihood that these lines are freighted with significance: the precision of Dante's language. His phrasing is characteristically stable. The image may seem complex, but it is conceived in terms of number and geometrical alignments, and as such conveyed with no trace of ambiguity. Commentators are as sure of being able to envisage—though perhaps more in a diagrammatic than in a truly pictorial sense—what the protagonist beheld as they are uncertain of what it all means. The aspect of lines 109–111 that does most to awaken in the reader this intuition that the image harbors some precise significance is number.⁴¹ And predictably, the modern scholar who picks up on this most zealously is Charles Singleton. Here, from his 1970–75 Bollingen Series edition of the *Commedia*, are his notes to lines 110, 111 and 113:

110. *tra la mezzana e le tre e tre liste*: The image is quite precise. The wings of the griffin, upstretched, pass on either side of the middle band of light and thus have on either side three bands, symbol of the Trinity. If to either of these groups the middle band be added, the result is four, the symbol of humanity, and the numbers so divided equal $3 + 1 + 3$.

111. *sì ch'a nulla, fendendo, facea male*: The wings in no way disturb the bands in this $3 + 1 + 3$ arrangement, which would seem to signify that the two natures of Christ represented by the wings are in harmony with the divine and the human as represented by the streamers of light arranged in combinations of three and four.

113. *le membra d'oro avea*: Cf. Cant. 5:11: "Caput eius aurum optimum." ("His head is pure gold.") *quant'era uccello*: i.e., the head, neck, and wings, this being the divine part, as it were.⁴²

What one notices straightaway is that the challenge of producing a plausible explanation induces the scholar to add a new difficulty of his own in

the contradiction that arises when we juxtapose his glosses for lines 111 and 113. Clearly, the griffin's wings cannot "signify the two natures of Christ" and at the same time be a symbol of the "divine part" alone. Our real interest, however, lies with the central premise in Singleton's gloss: the numerological element.⁴³ This is almost certainly derived from Scartazzini's magisterial Leipzig commentary of 1872–82, where we find the following:

Il Poeta non dice a caso: 'Tra la mezzana e le tre e tre liste', distinguendo così tre e tre e una quarta. Ricordiamoci che 'tre' è il numero della Deità . . . , e *quattro* il numero del mondo . . . , i quali due numeri sono contenuti ed uniti nel sette. Contando le liste dalla destra o dalla sinistra sino all'ala destra o sinistra del Grifone, sono 'tre', il numero della Divinità. Aggiungendo 'la mezzana' sono *quattro*, il numero dell'umanità. Tutte insieme sono *sette*, il numero dell'unione fra Deità ed umanità. Le ale del Grifone non ne intersecano una sola, non distruggono cioè nè la bella armonia fra 'tre' e *quattro*, nè la loro unione in *sette*. Ci pare che quest'allegoria sia bastantemente chiara.

There is an inadvertent irony in that resounding "bastantemente chiara." For it is not at all easy to see how the fact that the wings pass through both groupings of streamers, rather than just through one of them, can be equated with the preservation of the harmonious relationship through which deity and humanity are conjoined.⁴⁴ And even if this does make sense, it remains unclear why Dante would choose this exceptionally strange image to make such a point. The fundamental problem remains, for we wind up with a statement of theological doctrine so unedifying as to leave us wondering why on earth Dante would want to make it at all.

But let us consider in a little more depth for a moment Scartazzini's numerological ploy. There is no doubt that Dante may have been familiar with the tradition of religious symbolism which derived the significance of the number 7 from the fact that it is the sum of three, the number of the divinity, and four, the number of the world and of humanity.⁴⁵ It is an idea which he could have encountered, for example, in Augustine or Macrobius.⁴⁶ This is beside the point, however. The problem lies in the entirely arbitrary manipulation required to produce a "4" from the pattern of numbers Dante presents us with. Even Singleton's typographical decision to represent Dante's image as $3 + 1 + 3$ is far from innocent since it implies that it is somehow natural to add the numbers together in that order. A more objective formulation would look something like

3–[1]–3. Or, better still perhaps, 3 || 1 || 3. There is, at any rate, nothing in Dante's phrasing to suggest that we should add the central "1" to either of the outer 3s. One might be tempted to object that Scartazzini's suggestion that we should perform this addition leaves us wondering to which "3" the "1" should be added. In fact, though, Scartazzini's "contando le liste dalla destra o dalla sinistra" and Singleton's "combinations" in the plural seem to indicate that we are to add both 3s simultaneously, to yield a 3 || 4 and a 4 || 3, one superimposed upon the other. To some degree, then, the symmetry of the image is preserved, but only by being violated twice, once from each side. For the Scartazzini-Singleton argument to work, the *liste* would have to be, as Singleton puts it, "arranged in combinations of three and four," which they obviously are not.⁴⁷ What is missing from Scartazzini's 3 + 4 is the number 1, which has been removed from view by being combined with one of the 3s. Line 110 actually tells us to do the opposite. It compels us to focus on the central band isolated by the two wings on either side: the 1 in the centre. This is the point of the symmetry.⁴⁸ The seven air-streamers are configured such that the central *lista* is differentiated from the other six. The "tre e tre" dyad would seem to indicate, *pace* Scartazzini-Singleton, that if there is any arithmetic to be done here, the numbers that are to be added together are 3 and 3. What we have, surely, is not a 3 and a 4 but a 1 and a 6. In other words, what we are looking for is a group of seven entities from which one distinguishes itself in some way.

This brings us to Federico Bucci's liturgical reading of the *processione mistica*, where we find, exceptionally, that critical attention is brought to bear on most, if not all, of the details of the first *terzina*. Bucci reads the procession in the Earthly Paradise in relation to descriptions of the Roman rite in which seven acolytes bearing candles preceded the pope as he approached the altar. Like Francesco Buti in the fourteenth century, Bucci realizes that the griffin's wings "emphasize" the central *lista*, the "mezzana," which is precisely what happens in the Roman rite. The acolytes position the seven candles such that they remain aligned but so that the central candle, which symbolizes Christ, stands alone, flanked by three candles on either side. The formation as a whole is an expression of the relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit. It seems likely that Bucci is the first critic to discover a textual analogue for the 3 || 1 || 3 of Dante's *liste*, though he notes that there are formal and chronological disparities that make it improbable that these elements of the Roman rite could have

been Dante's source.⁴⁹ More obviously, if the central candle and, thus, the *mezzana lista* represent Christ, how is this to be reconciled with the traditional reading of the griffin itself as Christ? Nonetheless, the *processione mistica* evidently does belong to the realm of ceremonial ritual, and within the complex nexus of meanings that frame the griffin there are undeniable echoes of liturgical traditions.⁵⁰ This cannot, however, be the whole story; for we still have no way of making sense of line 111. What else, it must now be asked, might there have been in Dante's world that corresponded to the "tre e tre liste" bracketing the central "mezzana"? Were we to take our cue from the political reading of lines 112–14, we would set about trying to identify this 7 composed of a 6 and a 1 in the context of the political culture of the Florentine commune in the early Trecento.

The Six and the One: "Priores Artium et Vexilliferum Iustitie"

One of the places in which these seven entities might be sought is the history of the Florentine guilds, which seems promising because it is, in part, a narrative about numbers. From the faltering emergence of the *secondo popolo* in 1266–67, and again with its revival in 1282, the principal guilds participating in the city's government numbered seven.⁵¹ It is not entirely impossible to conceive of these seven *arti maggiori* as composed of six and one. Salvemini characterizes the guild of the *Giudici e Notai* as "una professione liberale," differentiating it from the other six guilds, which are engaged in activities of an industrial or commercial nature.⁵² But whether this warrants the claim that the guild of judges and notaries must necessarily occupy the position of the "mezzana" is another matter. For all their eminence, it seems doubtful that the *Giudici e Notai* merited the distinction of being framed by the *grifon's* gilded wings.⁵³ But, then, for which of the *arti* might Dante have reserved this honor?

If there is no obvious way to map the seven *arti maggiori* onto the *liste*, we must try another tack. So, let us, for the moment, remove the central *lista* and suppose that the number to focus on initially is not seven at all but six. This makes an enormous difference, since it turns out that the number six has perhaps a greater resonance than any other in the history of the Florentine Republic and takes us to the heart of the commune's political organization. For what springs most readily to mind is not only

the fact that the city was divided into *sesti*—or to use the modern term *sestieri*—but that, more importantly still, the highest level of its magistracy was composed of six *priori*.

The earliest use of the term *priori* to designate the men who held the highest office in the commune's professional guilds can be traced back at least to the beginning of the thirteenth century.⁵⁴ When the Ghibelline regime in Florence was weakened by the defeat of Manfred at Benevento in 1266, the *popolo* was able briefly to reassert itself. A new government composed of Guelphs and Ghibellines drawn from both the *grandi* and the *popolo* recognized the right of the seven major guilds to form a federation and to organize themselves militarily. And from this cooperation among the *arti* there emerged a committee known as the "priorate of the guilds," through which the *popolo* became empowered for the first time to express its political aspirations. With the entry of Charles of Anjou into Florence in 1267 and the establishment of a Guelph regime, the new priorate was abolished. Although short-lived, the priorate of 1266 was an integral component of the Florentine executive, entrusted with duties which were no longer merely consultative but also legislative.⁵⁵ As such it laid the foundation for the re-emergence of the priorate of the guilds in 1282. Henceforth it would endure for two centuries and more as the defining institution of the republic's political administration. The first priorate of June 1282 consisted of only three guildsmen, but the membership was augmented to six in August with one prior being elected from each *sesto*.⁵⁶ October saw the election of the first prior from the guild of judges and notaries. All seven of the *arti maggiori* were now represented and the priorate assumed "il carattere di organo statale di governo . . . un istituto, nel quale culmina la costituzione di tutto il Comune fiorentino."⁵⁷ Whereas the *priori* of 1266 had occupied a secondary role in government, the institution of 1282 became "il potere centrale e il magistrato supremo della repubblica."⁵⁸ What concerns us, of course, is the connection between this story and Dante's "tre e tre." And the essential point is that from 1282 to the publication of the *Purgatorio* in 1315, apart from those initial two months and an 18-month period beginning in April 1313, the highest magistracy of the commune always consisted of six *priori*.⁵⁹

But if the "tre e tre" alludes to the six *priori*, then what or who might the seventh *lista*—the "mezzana"—represent? If we pursue the logic of our hypothesis and remain within the context of Florentine civic government, there is only one plausible answer to this question. The seventh

lista must allude to the *gonfaloniere della giustizia*. According to the early chronicles, the creation of the office of the standardbearer of justice was one of the central provisions of the *Ordinances of Justice*, the legislation of January 1293 which so radically altered the complexion of Florentine politics that it has been described as “the most important political document in Florentine history.”⁶⁰ In the late nineteenth century, however, Salvemini demonstrated that Dino Compagni and other *cronisti* had confused the *Ordinamenti* of 1293 with earlier laws promulgated in 1289. This is the date given by Leonardo Aretino in his *Storie fiorentine* where he asserts that the office of the *gonfaloniere* was established “sette anni dopo i Priori dell’Arti,” and Salvemini shows that this date is confirmed by documents of 1290–91.⁶¹ The *Ordinances* of 1293 were nonetheless of vital importance insofar as they introduced a crucial redefinition of the role of the standardbearer. Aretino’s account has Giano della Bella urging the *popolani* to decree that the *gonfaloniere* must take up residence with the priors. And duly, we read in the *Ordinamenti* that the priors and the standardbearer are to live, eat and sleep in the same house. The authority of the latter is to be equal to that of the priors and his term of office, like theirs, is to last two months.⁶² Throughout the *Ordinamenti Iustitiae*, the standardbearer is spoken of in conjunction with the priors with whom he was to work at all times in close association. The phrase “*priores artium et vexilliferum iustitie*” occurs numerous times. In the revisions made in April 1293, by the priorate that included Giano della Bella, to strengthen the *Ordinamenti*, the same privileges and immunities conferred upon the *priori* were extended to the *gonfaloniere*.⁶³ The six priors and the standardbearer were seen as a single entity, an executive composed of seven individuals. As Salvemini puts it, “il Gonfaloniere della Giustizia . . . faceva tutto un insieme coi Priori.”⁶⁴

According to Dino Compagni’s *Cronica*, the *gonfaloniere* wielded the same power—“la medesima balia” (1.11)—as the six priors.⁶⁵ Yet he alone could exercise this authority through the call to arms of a thousand armed men. The “seventh prior” was provided with so formidable a force in part because his duties included the execution of judicial sentences passed down by the court of the *podestà* on the heads of unruly magnates.⁶⁶ This figure, in whom was vested the constitutional power of the Florentine *popolo*, is thus most properly viewed as a “*primus inter pares*,” precisely as Dante’s image of the isolated central streamer suggests.⁶⁷ We also find that the solution to the riddle posed by the first *terzina* can now be linked to

the chromatic symbolism of the second, for, as Dino Compagni's account reminds us, the standard entrusted to the *gonfaloniere* bore the design of a vermillion cross on a white ground ("uno gonfalone dell'arme del popolo, che è la croce rossa nel campo bianco")—the colors of the Florentine Commune, which are also those of the griffin's leonine body.⁶⁸

If the *Ordinamenti* suggest a solution to the riddle of the *liste*, however, they also raise another question, that of Dante's attitude to the *secondo popolo*. Do we need, for example, to square our reading with the fact that, in *Purgatorio* 6 (127–51), Dante seems to regard the Florentine *popolo* with contempt? No one has written more perceptively on this topic than the historian John Najemy, who views Dante's derision of the *popolo* in terms of a rejection of a political culture rooted in the constant renegotiation of power. The instability of Florentine political institutions provoked in Dante a yearning for the "uncontested power" exercised by the old nobility of Cacciaguida's city and by the emperor of the *Monarchia*.⁶⁹ Through his appropriation in *Purgatorio* 6 of the language of the *popolo*—terms such as *giustizia*, *comune* and *civili*—Dante constructs a "bitter parody" of Florentine political and legislative discourse.⁷⁰ Yet when, in *Paradiso* 15 and 16, the poet sets out to define the ideal community, he does so by employing the concepts and language of the *popolo*. Cacciaguida's evocation of a society organized according to the trades and professions plied by its citizens corresponds closely to the guild-based Florentine polity of the late Duecento. It is, as Najemy puts it, "a utopia straight out of the dreams of the *popolo*." The condemnation which emerges from these cantos of the degeneracy of the nobility reflects the industrious and thrifty *popolo*'s distrust of the *magnati*, of their overbearing arrogance, ostentatious wealth and international ambitions.⁷¹ The achievement of the *popolo* in reducing the political influence of the *magnati* can be seen in the composition of the priorates of the mid-1290s. That such a high proportion of priors and standardbearers were, like Dante himself, the first members of their family to hold such a post testifies to the fact that "the government established in 1293 did not represent the intererests of the merchant-banking elite."⁷² It is the profligacy and corruption of this elite that are the targets of Cacciaguida's invective.

Ultimately though, in the context of our reading of the *grifon*, Dante's attitude to the *secondo popolo* may be beside the point. As Cacciaguida confirms in *Paradiso*, the poet saw himself as having moved beyond affiliations to party. If lines 109–10 are an allusion to the priorate and the

gonfaloniere della giustizia, it might simply be that these were the defining civic institutions of the Florentine Republic, and as such function as emblems of the commune and, by extension, of its sovereignty as a self-governing city-state.⁷³

The Ostendali and Civic Procession

Dante first describes the air-streamers with the phrase “di tratti pennelli” (line 75). As the flames of the candelabra (“le fiammelle”) advance, they leave behind a strange tracery of painted air, and so appear like brushes drawn (“tratti pennelli”) by an artist’s hand across the canvas of the sky. Several commentators in the sixteenth century, however, began to argue for an alternative reading of “pennelli,” pointing to an older usage of the word to mean “standard” or “flag.”⁷⁴ The significance of Dante’s phrase has remained controversial ever since, although opinion is unevenly divided and most expositors favor the traditional gloss, for which a number of supporting arguments have been adduced.⁷⁵ Some are concerned with form and seem constrained by their literal-minded view of Dante’s mimesis. Where one critic sees a close correspondence between the painter’s brush and the candle flame in the wind, another suggests that there is not enough of a breeze to raise the standard to the horizontal. Besides, the kind of flags suggested by “pennelli” would be far too short to convey the impression given by the air-ribbons.⁷⁶ As well as fatally confusing the two terms of the simile, this latter gloss also runs foul of one of the most common defences of the Trecento gloss. For it depends on assimilating the “fiammelle” to the “liste,” and several commentators insist that Dante cannot be likening the “fiammelle,” the subject of “avean sembiante,” to “stendardi” since this is the metaphor he employs in line 79 to describe the “sette liste.”⁷⁷ The other notion commonly reiterated in the commentaries of the last century is that the image of the brush laden with color accords better with Dante’s diction in the passage as a whole, the “aere dipinto” of line 74 and the “colori” in line 77.⁷⁸ Yet both of these arguments, as Bosco and Reggio observe, could be inverted to lend support to the opposing camp. The “questi” of line 79 might be taken to imply that the “pennelli” are indeed an anticipation of the “ostendali” metaphor, and that the second image confirms the first.⁷⁹ If the “cromatismo pittorico” makes us think of the painter’s brush, it might also correspond

to the "ricca varietà cromatica degli standardi dei nostri Comuni medievali." Ultimately, Bosco and Reggio claim, the question cannot be resolved.⁸⁰ But, as we shall see, there may be more in that latter linkage between the artist's palette and the heraldic display of the medieval commune than they realize. If nothing else, an image of flags borne aloft is far from incongruous in the context of a procession.

When we come in line 79 to the term *ostendali*, we are on firmer ground since this is indisputably a synonym for *gonfaloni*. An "ostendale" was a banner of the kind carried in procession in the medieval Italian communes.⁸¹ In some of the early commentaries, the term is taken to refer to the standards which announced the presence of the emperor, perhaps on a military expedition.⁸² But this emphasis can be disregarded since it is a distraction from the central, and for Dante's contemporaries far more familiar, role of *gonfaloni* in civic ritual. Villani recounts how in 1266 the communal authorities decreed that each of the seven *arti maggiori* was to adopt not only "consoli e capitudini" but also "suo gonfalone e insegna."⁸³ With the resurgence of the popolo in 1282, the twelve most important guilds were again required to nominate a *gonfaloniere*; and by the end of the decade the privilege had been extended to the bottom tier of those guilds permitted to participate in politics.⁸⁴ The bestowal of the *gonfalone* was a means of allowing the guild to organize itself militarily. From an earlier date, however, the *sesti* into which the commune was divided had also been used for this purpose, and here again it was around the *gonfalone* that the companies of armed men were to rally. The *gonfaloni* thus became powerful symbols of both the corporate and civic-military identity of the city's male population. Indeed, their role in the Florentine psyche was such that the Ciompi rebellion of 1378 was only crushed when the authorities ordered all those in a general assembly of the guilds to surrender their flags and stand instead beneath the banners of their military companies. As this would have destroyed the "occupational identity" of the Ciompi, they refused to obey, but were then set upon by the other guildsmen, who wrested their *gonfalone* from them. The crowd in the piazza cut the flag into pieces. In the words of Richard Trexler,

The flag was the most important image of group solidarity in the summer of 1378, and it became the prerequisite of procession Observers wrote as if people were mere adjuncts of banners throughout the summer. "All the flags [were] in the Piazza, with the people under them."⁸⁵

The “ostendale,” then, far from being an accoutrement of monarchs and emperors, possessed a vital symbolic force in the political life of the commune. Correspondingly, Dante’s insertion of the word in line 79 might, by the lights of our interpretation of the *grifon*, be taken as a signal that we are no longer in the realm of theological or liturgical symbolism, or of scriptural exegesis, but in the secular world of civic ritual. Is there, then, behind the hushed and brittle artifice of Dante’s allegory a scene conjured from the poet’s memories of Florentine civic ritual? From the very start, as the opening rubric of the *Vita Nuova* declares, Dante has been a *poeta della memoria*.⁸⁶ Can we break through the surface of the masque to reveal an evocation of lived experience—a festive street scene hidden beneath the austerity of the text?

At the same time, this is the moment to concede that my claims are, to some extent, running ahead of the evidence. For it is not unlikely, alas, that the historical record can furnish nothing to confirm that the *priori* did in fact take part in public processions in the late Duecento. Indeed, Richard Trexler writes of the belated access of the representatives of government to the “ritual scene.” Florentines were reluctant to allow “official charisma” to supplant that of the city’s elite families. It was not until the 1340s that the public image of those who governed the commune began to emerge from this suppression. Though, as Trexler acknowledges, a question remains as to whether “the evidence has been read correctly.”⁸⁷ Besides, even if it could be shown that the priors did not participate in processions, this might simply mean that we need to view the mystical procession as an imaginary, utopian construct which draws selectively upon, rather than documenting, actual historical practices.

It has often been noted that the mystical pageant of Canto 29 contains echoes of the processions that marked the numerous religious festivals celebrated in Florence and numerous other communities.⁸⁸ Of these the most salient would seem to be the Florentine feast of Corpus Domini, the processional element of which, long established by local custom as a development from earlier Palm Sunday processions, received its official sanction in 1311. Though it is difficult to reconstruct an accurate picture of this event as it was staged in Florence, it appears to have featured the carrying of large candles, or candelabra, and the scattering of rose petals by youths garlanded with flowers processing through streets decked with greenery. There was also a baldachin that symbolized the heavens, a feature recalled perhaps by the aerial rainbow-canopy trailing behind Dante’s

candelabra.⁸⁹ Some of the elements of the Florentine Corpus Domini procession that scholars have seen reflected in *Purgatorio* 29 are also to be found in other civic rituals. The offering of *ceri* was, for example, a crucial part of the feast of San Giovanni, as was possibly the enclosure of public spaces by canopies, though this custom may postdate the *Commedia*.⁹⁰ The scholarly focus on the eucharistic feast is, obviously, of a piece with the general tendency to read the symbolism of the masque as a whole, and the griffin in particular, entirely in theological terms. Formal analogies between the *mistica processione* and Corpus Domini only confirm the implications that commentators have seen in the liturgical language of Canto 29. By underscoring the presence of the socio-historical setting, we have reinforced the eucharistic connotations of the griffin.⁹¹ The effect of such emphases, however, is also to obscure the role in civic-religious processions of the secular elements of the commune.⁹²

Ultimately, it matters little whether or not we are able to match the details of the Dante's *sacra processione* to any specific civic ritual in Trecento Florence. For the masque of Canto 29 represents a translation of the historical reality into an ideal, mythologized form. At the same time, as Aldo Vallone notes, Dante clearly draws on his own real experience of public rituals and ceremonies, both religious and municipal, observed in the various cities he had known in northern Italy. The poet has invented nothing.⁹³ For all its strangeness, the mystical procession is unaccountably familiar. Or so at least it must have appeared to Dante's contemporaries. The history of medieval Florence is essentially a history of its civic institutions, of the guilds and their creation of a new political culture. Florentines used the ritual of formal processions in the public space of the city to celebrate and affirm, with an almost religious fervor, what their republic meant to them.⁹⁴ The extravagant pageantry of such occasions became the principal mode whereby Florentines were able to witness "the political process at work."⁹⁵ This was the civic culture to which Dante belonged.

L'arcobaleno inesistente

The reference to the rainbow which immediately precedes Dante's use of the word "ostendali" at the beginning of line 79 has proved problematic for two related reasons, the first of which has to do with the history of

scientific conceptions of the rainbow. In the early fourteenth century, Jacopo della Lana (1324–28) confidently asserted that the *liste* were “in sette colori, simile all’*yris*,” an opinion also espoused by the Ottimo.⁹⁶ Yet these two early glosses are anomalous insofar as there was no consensus among medieval writers that the rainbow was composed of seven colors.⁹⁷

Greek philosophers held differing opinions on this subject. While Empedocles, Democritus, and Plato maintained that there were four colors in the rainbow, it was Aristotle’s trichromatic theory which prevailed in the Ancient world, although it did not go wholly unchallenged. One of the first Latin authors to consider the question, Seneca the Younger, asserted that the rainbow resulted from the blending of a thousand hues. Ptolemy, on the other hand, in a section of his *Optics* that is now lost, was reputed to have identified seven colors. In the Middle Ages, the Aristotelian position is perpetuated in the writings of Avicenna (980–1037), Aquinas (1225–74) and Witelmo (c. 1230–). Averroës (b. 1126), Honorius Augustodunensis (in his *De imagine mundi libri tres* of 1122–25), William of Conches (c. 1080–1154), along with Thomas of Cantimpré and Bartholomaeus Anglicus in the thirteenth century all inclined to a tetrachromatic theory, as did Theodoric of Freiberg (d. c. 1320), who also laid claim in his *De iride et radicalibus impressionibus* to experimental proof. The most eccentric contribution appears in Roger Bacon’s *Opus majus* (1266–67), where he avers that the colors number five “in contrast to the seven which he attributes to Aristotle.”⁹⁸

Essentially, then, opinions were divided between the tri- and quadricolor theories. Apart from Ptolemy, possibly, and Bacon’s misrepresentation of Aristotle, there are no precedents in the mainstream of the scientific tradition for a perception of the rainbow as heptachromatic; and to impute such a view to Dante solely on the evidence of the image in *Purgatorio* 29 seems rash. If the poet did hold an opinion on this question, he would probably have inclined to the Aristotelian theory, and in any event have been unlikely to have placed the number of colors at more than four.⁹⁹ Let us not, nevertheless, overlook the seven-color *arcobaleno* in the twelfth-century manual of Theophilus offering instruction to artists on how to paint rainbows (*De diversis artibus* 1.16). Peter Dronke, to whom we owe this discovery, wonders if perhaps artists “looked more closely than philosophers or scientists, but seldom wrote about what they saw.” To this one might add that, given the references in Dante’s poetry to the techniques of painters, it is not entirely inconceivable that, as an

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amateur painter himself, he might have been familiar with Theophilus's manual or in the habit of making his own close observations of natural phenomena such as rainbows. In the end, though, Theophilus's treatise, as Dronke emphasizes, constitutes "a unique and isolated testimony," and to read Dante's allusion to the rainbow as the Ottimo does is to credit the poet with anticipating, albeit intuitively, discoveries first made empirically by Newton in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁰

It is, therefore, reassuring to find that Pietro Alighieri, who refers to Aristotle's *Meteorologica*, identifies just three colors—white, red and green—which he claims symbolize the three theological virtues ("tres virtutes theologicas").¹⁰¹ In the next generation, Francesco da Buti (1385–95) sees the *liste* as being "di diversi quattro colori; cioè rosso, sanguigno, verde e bianco," and then develops a complex scheme, later recycled by Landino (1481), enabling him to link the sacraments supposedly symbolized by the *liste* to the gifts of the Holy Spirit represented by the candelabra. Baptism, for example, is "di colore vermillio o sanguigno" because it is a sign of a piety which has its roots in charity ("che sta radicata in su la carità . . . e però è segnato di vermillio o sanguigno").¹⁰²

The second question concerns the ambivalence of the phrase "tutte in quei colori." We cannot be sure if what is meant here is that each of the *liste* is rainbow-colored or if the rainbow is the effect produced by the combination of all seven streamers, each of which corresponds to one of the colors of the spectrum.¹⁰³ In this latter case, of course, there better had be seven colors, which is why the grammatical and historical questions have become so inextricably entangled in the minds of modern commentators. Indeed, some editors conclude that since we cannot know Dante's opinion with regard to the number of colors in the rainbow, the problem of how to gloss these lines must remain intractable.¹⁰⁴

Through their pursuit of theological meaning expositors have found themselves ensnared in a dilemma.¹⁰⁵ On the one hand, it seems preferable to assume that there are seven distinct colors because this means that, even if we remain ignorant of the underlying symbolism, it is at least conceivable that some kind of symbolism is at work since each *lista* can be assigned its own color. There is an appealing simplicity to this reading, which is consonant with the standard view of the *liste* as each representing one of either the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit or the seven sacraments.¹⁰⁶ But when commentators find themselves faced with the historical probability that Dante thought the rainbow was composed of only three or four

colors, the symbolic reading seems to collapse. Should we set greater store by our reconstruction of contemporary scientific lore or by the exigencies of symbolic coherence? By insisting on Dante's Aristotelianism we wind up trampling over his poetry. Curiously, this contradiction seems not to have bothered Francesco da Buti. In his scheme, the sacraments of Holy Orders and Penance are both symbolized by the color green. One is a sign of "fortessa" and the other of "consillio," both of which are "rooted" in hope. Likewise, Confirmation, Extreme Unction and Matrimony are all connoted by either "rosso" or "sanguigno vermiglio" on account of their association with charity. So a tetrachromatic theory of the rainbow need not preclude an interpretation that invests the *liste* with symbolic, or even doctrinal, meaning. Nonetheless, Buti's scheme is rebarbatively complex. In general, the theological readings begin to look untenable whenever we consider the difficulty of having to decide how each gift or sacrament is to be linked symbolically to a specific color.¹⁰⁷ As he contrives to remedy the incompatibility of the numbers four and seven, Buti casts the arbitrary nature of the symbolic edifice into still sharper relief. Exceptionally, there are also those who have entertained the notion that each *lista* exhibits the same given number of colors. Thus the point of Dante's scheme might be to affirm that in each of the seven virtues represented by the *liste* are "tutte le virtù dello Spirito Santo," or else in the Aristotelian version to suggest a Trinitarian symbolism.¹⁰⁸ As so often, though, too many threads are left hanging, and it is hard to imagine how such theologico-symbolic readings can conduce to anything but the usual mare's nest.

The one other strategy of note entails drawing connections between Dante's "onde fa l'arco il Sole e Delia il cinto" and his use elsewhere of the sun and moon as emblems of the empire and church. Appealing to the scriptural image of the wisdom of God as being multi-colored, John Carroll (1904) saw an echo in line 78 of the arguments of the *Monarchia*, the rainbow signifying that "Church and Empire, sun and moon, alike derived their light, and therefore their authority, direct from God." In a similar vein, Diana Modesto links the solar and lunar rainbows both to Dante's political thought and to the sign of God's covenant in Genesis 9:12–13.¹⁰⁹ But these interpretations too imply that the protagonist actually sees a rainbow. The text, however, does not insist on this, or at least not in the sense that each of the seven bands of the *liste* is a different color and that together they constitute an object that resembles a rainbow. The irony of the "rainbow" in line 78 might simply be that, like all rainbows,

it is not really there. A rainbow is an optical illusion and whether you can see one or not depends on where you are. It is the consequence of a particular vantage point. And if we are to construe the whole sequence as a subliminal evocation of civic ritual, what matters most is to imagine Dante's own vantage point, or points: the countless places that he might have stood as both a child and an adult to observe the solemn passage of *cortei* through the streets of Florence.

By viewing the rainbow simile as part of an oblique depiction of the *gonfaloni* carried in processions, one obtains a picture in which none of the *liste* are monochromatic, though some of the *gonfaloni* may have borne no more than two colors. For, while the banners borne by the priors would perhaps have incorporated several colors depending on the *arte* or *sesto* to which they belonged, the standard of the *vexillifer iustitie* was white and red. Rather, it must be that *as a whole* the seven *ostendali* give the impression of including all the colors of the rainbow. All that is meant by lines 77–78, then, is that what the protagonist saw was a profusion of different colors. It is therefore far better, as Simon Gilson suggests, to allow that Dante's language here is as poetic, and consequently as unscientific, as that of his Latin precursors, who often described the rainbow as having "mille colores."¹¹⁰ Now we no longer have the embarrassment of needing to identify which colors are present or to discover how they might correspond to any determinate symbolic meaning. Furthermore, besides the coherence that accrues to our reading by turning once more, as with the griffin itself, to the history of civic heraldry, we also have the advantage of a readily available contemporary account of precisely the kind of effect that Dante seems to have in mind. Here is Giovanni Villani on the *gonfaloni* of the companies of armed men belonging to each of the *sesti*.

E ciò fu fatto a dì XX d'ottobre, gli anni di Cristo MCCL, e in quello dì si diedono per lo detto capitano XX gonfaloni per lo popolo a certi caporali partiti per compagnie d'arme e per vicinanze, e a più popoli insieme, acciò che quando bisognasse, ciascuno dovesse trarre armato al gonfalone della sua compagnia, e poi co' detti gonfaloni trarre al detto capitano del popolo. . . . Le 'nsegne de' detti gonfaloni erano queste: nel sesto d'Oltrarno, il primo si era il campo vermiglio e la scala bianca; il secondo, il campo bianco con una ferza nera; il terzo, il campo azzurro iv'entro una piazza bianca con nicchi vermigli; il quarto, il campo rosso con uno dragone verde. Nel sesto di San Piero Scheraggio, il primo fu il campo azzurro e uno carroccio giallo, ovvero a oro; il secondo, il campo giallo con uno

toro nero; il terzo, il campo bianco con uno leone rampante nero; il quarto, era pezza gagliarda, cioè a liste a traverso bianche e nere: questa era di San Pulinari. Nel sesto di Borgo, il primo era il campo giallo e una vipera, ovvero serpe verde; il secondo, il campo bianco e una aguglia nera; il terzo, il campo verde con uno cavallo isfrenato covertato a bianco e a croce rossa. Nel sesto di San Brancazio, il primo, il campo verde con uno leone naturale rampante; il secondo, il campo bianco con uno leone rampante rosso; il terzo, il campo azzurro con uno leone rampante bianco. In porte del Duomo, il primo, il campo azzurro con uno leone a oro; il secondo, il campo giallo con uno drago verde; il terzo, il campo bianco con uno leone rampante azzurro incoronato. Nel sesto di porte San Piero, il primo, il campo giallo con due chiavi rosse; il secondo, a ruote acerchiate bianche e nere; il terzo, il di sotto a vai e di sopra rosso. E come ordinò il detto popolo le 'nsegne e gonfalon in città, così fece in contado a tutti i pivieri il suo ch'erano 96; e ordinargli a leghe, acciò che'll'una atasse l'altra, e venissero a città e in oste quando bisognasse.¹¹¹

Besides *bianco* and *nero*, the colors which feature in the twenty *gonfalon* Villani describes are *vermiglio*, *rosso*, *azzurro*, *verde*, *giallo* and *oro*.

The emphasis upon the *sesti* during the years in which Dante himself was politically active was an extension of the original conception of the priorate. As Compagni affirms, the first six *priori* of 1282 were selected such that there was “uno per sestiere.”¹¹² Indeed, this was why there were six priors. If the priors are to be associated with any *gonfalon* in the poetic, quasi-mythologized vision of *Purgatorio* 29, it should perhaps be with those of the military companies of the *sesti* they represented.¹¹³ It was presumably through their sense of belonging to the specific neighborhood in which they were born that each of Dante's compatriots first constructed a sense of their own identity as Florentine. Such was the symbolic resonance of the military standards assigned to the subdivisions of the *sesti* in 1250 that the localities themselves came to be known—“metonymically” as Najemy puts it—as “gonfalon.”¹¹⁴

Undoubtedly, the *sesti* played a fundamental role in the forging of civic identity. But then so did the guilds. When Charles Martel implies in the *Paradiso* that no human being can fulfill their potential on earth without being a “cive,” his notion of citizenship, predicated on the adherence of each individual to a particular profession, calls to mind the pivotal importance of the trade guilds in Florentine society (*Par.* 8.115–26). The colors of Dante's *liste* may well refer to the *gonfalon* of both the *sesto* and the *arte* to which each prior belonged. In the end, what matters is simply that the priorate alluded to in Canto 29 should function as a symbol of Florentine

sovereignty, an emblem of the distinctive nature of the commune as a self-governing polity.

Returning now to Villani, we should note that the point of the passage from the *Nuova Cronica* lies in the descriptive excess—the astonishing superabundance of color in the many-hued sea of flags. Unlike the ordered array of the rainbow, this is a riotous display of color wholly unamenable to the rational analysis of a proto-Newtonian scientist. Yet the fact that Villani is so exhaustive in his cataloguing of the *gonfalon*i is also a testimony to their cultural significance. We do not, of course, need Villani's text at all insofar as this aspect of communal culture thrives still throughout Italy. The impression conveyed by the *Nuova Cronica*—the blaze of heraldic color—can be experienced today in any number of festive events and especially in the historical processions which take place in Tuscan cities.¹¹⁵ Some of the most spectacular examples can be seen in the pageantry that accompanies the Florentine *calcio storico* or the Sienese *palio*, where the flags of the *contrade*, which correspond to Florence's *sestieri*, are a proud reminder of a civic culture that has survived since the golden age of the medieval communes. A Google image search on "gonfalon" will confirm that the custom of carrying standards bearing the heraldic devices of civic authorities, professional corporations and political parties is still very much in use. To see clearly what Dante wishes us to see in the *liste* and the griffin—and the protagonist throughout these cantos is surely doing nothing if not striving to bring objects into focus—entails that we step back from texts and re-enter the world of experience. The poem's commentators have always been too attuned to the figurative and rhetorical qualities of Dante's language to be able to entertain the possibility that the aerial ribbons are literally *ostendali*. It is not that the *gonfalon*i of the civic procession are standing in as a metaphor for the *liste*, but that the latter allude to the *gonfalon*i. Few, if any, of Dante's commentators have chosen to read his figurative language in this way. Although, exceptionally, there is it seems one medieval illuminator—Friedman describes his illustration of the procession as "una insolita parafrasi visuale"—who chose to depict the seven candelabra as *ostendali* carried by the "Anziani" in the vanguard of the mystical *corteo*.¹¹⁶

"Si ch'a nulla, fendendo, facea male"

This historical subtext of priors and civic processions dovetails neatly, of course, with the chronology of Dante's own life. It is crucial to bear in

mind that the civic executive symbolized by the aerial *ostendali* came into being in early 1293. Only two and a half years later, in November, 1295, having reached the qualifying age of thirty, Dante embarked on his own short-lived political career when he became a member of the Special Council of the Capitano del Popolo. It was a career which would culminate in June, 1300, with his election to serve a two-month term as a prior.¹¹⁷

Nowhere does Dante reveal more of himself than in the Earthly Paradise, where the advent of Beatrice brings a return to the confessional mode of the early lyrics and, in Canto 30 (at line 55), the only instance of the poet's insertion of his own name into the narrative. These cantos are not so much an anticipation of Paradise as a bout of therapy in which the protagonist is wrenched back to his earlier life in Florence. So would it really be so astonishing to uncover in this most autobiographical sequence of the *Commedia* an oblique reference to the political system in which Dante had not only served in public office, but had done so at the highest echelon of civic government? Can the canto be read as a cryptic mythologizing of the pinnacle of Dante's own career as a public official—an elliptical evocation of a moment when, in recognition of his own intellectual merits, he had been elected one of the six? Surely, we cannot help but wonder if something of his pride at this accomplishment is not reflected in *Inferno* 4, when he is welcomed among his peers as “sesto tra cotanto senno” (102), a phrase which recalls that Dante would have been the prior of his own *sesto*. And so perhaps this is another instance of what Justin Steinberg suggests is Dante's propensity to dehistoricize and textualize his own history.¹¹⁸ The poet translates his political career into a fictional narrative about his own literary art, turning from the real to the aesthetic just as in *Paradiso* 25 the tragedy of his exile will be annulled by the mythic healing power of the “vello” that is the great poem.

If I have turned here to the autobiographical implications of my reading of the griffin, it is also because it is relevant to the one important question that still remains unanswered, the question we began with. Why, in line 111, does Dante declare that the griffin's wings cause no harm to the airstreamers? We have seen already that the traditional interpretations, the notion that the divinity of Christ will not damage either the seven gifts of the spirit or the seven sacraments, or, still less plausibly, disturb the harmony of the hypostatic union, are all untenable. The alternative to the theological gloss that emerges from our Florentine reading should, by

now, be obvious. First, though, a word about the wings alone. They do not simply represent the Empire; their skyward thrust symbolizes its power, reaching to the ends of the earth. As Drina Oldroyd remarks, the fact that the wings extend beyond the range of the human eye suggests that they function as an emblem of "the boundless power of the Empire" as ordained by Jove in *Aeneid* 1.278–79—"his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono; / imperium sine fine dedi"—, words that Dante translates in the *Convivio*: "'A costoro—cioè alli Romani—né termine di cose né di tempo pongo; a loro hoe dato imperio senza fine'" (4.4.11).¹¹⁹

Plainly, in the context of my reading, the purpose of line 111 is to assert Dante's belief that the submission of the Florentine Republic to the Empire would result in no interference in the commune's political institutions. Yet the image perhaps says more than this. Instead of viewing the aquiline wings as isolating the central band of air, we could see the griffin's relation to the "mezzana" as protective. On this understanding, the role of the Empire is not so much to refrain from eroding the authority of civic government as to actively preserve the institutions through which popular sovereignty asserts itself. The tutelary embrace of the golden wings serves to safeguard the *gonfaloniere della giustizia*, the central figure through whom was expressed the ideology of just governance enshrined in the Ordinamenti di Giustizia. If the defining attribute of the "mezzana" is, quite simply, its centrality, then this must remind us that the standardbearer was the pivotal figure of the commune. It was around his white and vermillion standard that the forces sworn to defend the *popolo* were to congregate whenever danger threatened. Hence it is fitting that the imperial authority symbolized by the griffin's wings should confirm and preserve the centrality of this Florentine palladium.

At the same time, though, the historical record casts certain caveats in the path of this line of reasoning. For the realities of Florentine justice may not always have met with Dante's approbation. Justice was the central theme of the political discourse that evolved during this period in the guild-based governments of the northern Italian communes.¹²⁰ After the institution in Florence in 1289 of the *Gonfaloniere della Giustizia*, other cities quickly followed suit.¹²¹ The authors of the Florentine Ordinances of 1292 sought legitimacy for their anti-magnate reforms by appropriating a concept of justice from Roman law, where it was defined as the "constant and perpetual desire to ensure to each his right [*ius*]." ¹²² Yet clearly there were also dangers in all this. When Dante scathingly remarked that

the Florentine *popolo* had the word “giustizia” constantly “in somma della bocca” (*Purg.* 6.133), he meant to denounce those who paid only lipservice to their professed ideals. The poet’s animus against Florence had its deepest roots in the injustice of the edict that had condemned him to live the rest of his life as an “exul inmeritus.”¹²³ But this would not have been the first time that he had witnessed such abuses of judiciary power in his native city. One clause in particular in the Ordinamenti obliged the podestà to authorize the destruction of property before the enactment of any legal process. Guilt had only to be presumed in what was effectively a legitimization of extrajudicial reprisal and the violence of the mob.¹²⁴ Even when a formal sentence had been passed, the devastation visited by the *gonfaloniere* and his thousand henchmen on the houses of a delinquent magnate was draconian. Property was destroyed “radicitus et funditus.”¹²⁵ Although the Alighieri themselves were never ranked among the *magnati*, Dante undoubtedly had close ties with members of this class for whom the *gonfaloniere* must, at least in the mid-1290s, often have been perceived as a terrifying scourge. That Dante himself became a prior and participated in the government of the *secondo popolo* is surely a reflection of that devotion to justice apparent throughout the moral arguments of the *Commedia*. The opening lines of the poem suggest that, in exile, Dante came to see the struggle to reestablish *drittura* as the central theme of his life. And it is tempting in this respect to imagine that he may even have seen himself as an avatar of the figure framed by the griffin’s golden wings. Given the history of violence that surrounded the *gonfaloniere*, however, it is doubtful whether Dante could have embraced this Florentine institution so wholeheartedly that he would have contrived for it to be hallowed by the frame of the *grifon*’s wings. Ultimately, though, there is no need to make such a claim. The point is that the wings do not harm *any* of the *liste*. That is, what is being guaranteed is the inviolability of the seven-member priorate *as a whole*. The griffin’s wings preserve the institutional structure, the form of the commune’s government.

This is why, perhaps, there is such an emphasis on the rigidity of the wings. Indeed, this otherwise puzzling quality is one of the defining, and altogether un-Christlike, characteristics of the “animal binato.” We see it most clearly in *Purgatorio* 32, where the *grifon* moves such that “nulla penna crollonne” (line 27). And note too, incidentally, how the reiteration of the word “nulla” links this detail with line 111 of Canto 29. Above all, the image of the *grifon* suggests stability, and in the political

context the meaning of this must be that an alliance with the Empire would entail no derogation of Florence's autonomy as a self-governing city-state. Finally now, rather than having to wonder why Dante would want to impart what is at best a confoundingly jejune piece of theological doctrine, we are confronted by an idea whose urgency and importance the poet must have wished at all costs to impress upon his reader.

Much of this urgency stems from Dante's firsthand experience, in the crisis years of 1301–2, of what it meant for the sovereignty of the commune to be compromised by external powers. It was, according to Villani, only a matter of days after the commune had allowed Charles of Valois and his soldiers to enter Florence in the fateful November of 1301 that Corso Donati returned to orchestrate the *coup d'état* which, with the connivance of the French prince, restored the Blacks to power. On being reunited with his followers, the Barone proceeded immediately to liberate prisoners from the communal prisons and then to harry the priors from office.¹²⁶ In Dino Compagni's account, the priorate, unable to muster support from the *popolani*, resigns as the city descends into six days of violent chaos. The conspirators wasted no time in appointing new officeholders, all of them members of the Parte Nera.¹²⁷ Among the more than six hundred White Guelphs exiled the following April, was Dante himself, in Rome as the commune's "ambasciadore" to the papal court.¹²⁸ The subtext of lines 109–11 is as personal as it is political; for no one understood better than Dante the "male" that could be inflicted on Florence and its government of priors by those bent on disturbing the balance of power in the republic's civic institutions. The dispensation symbolized by the griffin is the obverse of the political instability which had such tragic personal consequences for Dante himself. The message for Florence is clear. If the city is to avoid having its independence undermined by the manipulations and coercions of foreign powers, then it has no alternative but to align itself with the Empire. Only then could there be any guarantee that the commune might be spared the loss of that which it prized most highly: its freedom and autonomy—the right, in other words, to govern itself by that system of associational democracy evoked in the proud pageantry of the guilds' *gonfalon*.

The crucial point about the confluence of the griffin's wings with the aerial banners—the nexus so dependably preserved by that rigidity noted above—is that it constitutes a *framework*, a word frequently used one imagines in references to the overarching bureaucracy of the modern European

Union. The horizontal and vertical components are locked together to yield an emblem of the institutional construct necessary to that condition of peace which, as Dante avers in the *Monarchia*, it is the emperor's primary duty to maintain.¹²⁹ Even the phrasing of "l'una e l'altra ale" is suggestive of balance. In the right angle formed by the conjunction of the wings and the *liste* there lies an implication of architectonic stability. So, at the centre of the procession there emerges a visual symbol of the political scaffolding which is the prerequisite of the happiness that can be attained through civic society.¹³⁰

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NOTES

1. Among the critics who have voiced dissentient opinions are the following. The meaning ascribed by each to the griffin is given in parentheses: Adolphe Napoléon Didron, *Iconographie chrétienne: Histoire de dieu* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1843), 229–30, 323, 469–70 (the pope); Gabriele Rossetti, *Comento analitico al Purgatorio di Dante Alighieri*, ed. Pompeo Giannantonio (Florence: Olschki, 1967), 367–69 (Ghibelline party); Frédéric-Guillaume Bergmann, *Vision de Dante au Paradis terrestre* (*Purgatorio*, canto XXIX, v. 16–XXXII, v. 160), trans. and commentary M. Bergmann (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1865), 9 (Cherubim); John Earle, "Introduction," in *The Earthly Paradise: An Experiment in Literal Verse Translation*, trans. by Charles Lancelot Shadwell (London: Macmillan, 1899), xiii–xxxviii (li) (Faithful of the Church); Colin Hardie, "The Symbol of the Gryphon in *Purgatorio* XXIX, 108 and following Cantos," in *Centenary Essays on Dante*, by members of the Oxford Dante Society (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 103–31 (114 and 129) (harmonious union of Dante's rational "spirit" with "bodily passions"); Peter Dronke, "*Purgatorio* XXIX," in *Cambridge Readings in Dante's Comedy*, ed. Kenelm Foster and Patrick Boyde (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 114–37 (131–33) (Dante's *daimôn*); Peter Armour, *Dante's Griffin and the History of the World: A Study of the Earthly Paradise* (*Purgatorio*, Cantos XXIX–XXXIII) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) (imperial Rome); John A. Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 189 (Rome and its empire); and Diana Modesto, "The Rainbow and the Griffin," in *Dante Colloquia in Australia (1982–1999)*, ed. Margaret Baker and Diana Glenn (Adelaide: Australian Humanities Press, 2000), 103–23 (104–5) (juridical concept of the emperor's two bodies). Defenses of the traditional interpretation of the griffin as Christ include: Joseph Chierici, *Il grifo dantesco: unità fantastica e concettuale della Divina Commedia* (Rome: De Luca, 1967); Erich von Richthofen, "Traces of Servius in Dante," *Dante Studies* 92 (1974): 117–28; Sergio Cristaldi, "'Per Dissimilia': Saggio sul Grifone dantesco," *Arcadia: Accademia Letteraria Italiana, Atti e Memorie*, series 3, vol. 9, fasc. 1 (Studi in onore di Giorgio Petrocchi) (Rome, 1988–1989): 57–94; and Lino Pertile, *La puttana e il gigante. Dal "Cantico dei Cantici" al Paradiso Terrestre di Dante* (Ravenna: Longo, 1998), 143–62; 205–13.

2. Corrado Calenda, "Incrispature soggettive e litanie numerali in *Purgatorio* XXIX," *Rivista di studi danteschi* 2, no. 2 (2002): 262–78 (262), writes of "una sorta di complessivo, quasi unanime consenso nella decodifica dei 'significati.' Consenso che investe in pratica l'intera serie delle figurazioni quivi attuate, se si eccettuano alcuni particolari—forse un solo particolare." The griffin alone remains "in certa misura, *sub iudice*," and is "il solo punto (ma che punto!) della processione, l'unica

tra le successive allegorie ancora in grado di suscitare, oggi, una disputa non banale o accademica, né risolvibile o liquidabile con tranquillità" (265).

3. See, for example, *Epist.* 5.4, 6.3 ("aquila in auro terribilis"); *Purg.* 10.80–81 ("l'aguglie ne l'oro"), 32.109–117, 32.125; *Par.* 6.4, 6.32, 18.94–108; and Dante Alighieri, *Commedia*, vol. 3 *Paradiso*, ed. Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi. (Milan: Mondadori, 1997), 265: "L'aquila appare sempre nella *Commedia*, come nelle Epistole, quale sacro segno dell'impero romano." The identity of the "aguglia . . . con penne d'oro" (line 20) that carries Dante aloft in the dream sequence of *Purgatorio* 9 remains the subject of debate, but see Zygmunt G. Barański, "Dante's Three Reflective Dreams," *Quaderni di Italianistica* 10, nos 1–2 (1989): 213–36 (218), who comments that the dream "catches the political resonances of cantos 6–8 which it crystallizes in the imperial symbolism of the eagle"; and Dante Alighieri, *Four Political Letters*, ed. Claire E. Honess (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2007), 50 n. 17: "Although the eagle of the dream is explicitly identified with the disguise adopted by Jupiter in order to snatch Ganymede, it cannot but recall implicitly also the imperial symbol."

4. For Guittone d'Arezzo's allusions to the "Leone" of Florence defeated at the battle of Montaperti in 1260, see *Poeti del Duecento*, ed. Gianfranco Contini, 2 vols (Milan: Ricciardi, 1960), 1: 206–7 (lines 16–34); and for episodes from the 1280s and early fourteenth century relating to the caged lions kept by the Commune, see Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Porta, 3 vols (Parma: Fondazione Pietro Bembo/Ugo Guanda, 1990–1991), 1: 363 (bk. 7.49); 2: 115 (bk. 9.42). On the Marzocco, see Alessandro Del Meglio, Maria Carchio and Roberto Manescalchi, *Il Marzocco: The Lion of Florence* (Florence: Grafica European Centre of Fine Arts, 2005).

5. Armour, *Dante's Griffin*, 286.

6. See also Peter Armour, "Il mito del Paradiso terrestre: rinnovamento della società mondiale," in *Dante. Mito e poesia. Atti del secondo Seminario dantesco internazionale (Monte Verità, Ascona, 23–27 giugno 1997)*, ed. Michelangelo Picone and Tatiana Crivelli (Florence: Cesati, 1999), 341–54, where it is asserted that the griffin is a "simbolo dell'idea di Roma" (352); and Armour, "Griffin," in *The Dante Encyclopedia*, ed. Richard Lansing (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 455–56. Armour also presented his hypothesis to a more general readership in "Griffins," in *Mythical Beasts*, ed. John Cherry (London: British Museum Press, 1995), 72–103 (93–94): "... Dante's griffin . . . comes to have a political rather than a theological meaning. It represents the poet's image of the ideal government, the perfect union of the power of the emperor (the eagle) with the power of the people (the lion)" (94).

7. See Claire Honess, *From Florence to the Heavenly City: The Poetry of Citizenship in Dante* (London: Legenda, 2006), 3: "Whilst most commentators agree that Dante's involvement in Florentine communal government constitutes an important element of his political formation, few have examined the concept of the city-state in any depth . . . consideration of its role has been effectively 'engulfed' by discussion of more contentious issues and, above all, by the question of Empire"; and Catherine Keen, *Dante and the City* (Stroud: Tempus, 2003). Other recent studies on Dante and the city include Marina Marietti, *Dante: la cité infernale* (Paris: Université de la Sorbonne nouvelle-Paris III, 2003), a special number of *Chroniques italiennes*, also published as *Dante: la città infernale* (Rome: Aracne, 2007); and Elisa Brilli, "Dalla 'città partita' alla 'civitas confusionis.'" Sulla tradizione e i modelli della Firenze dantesca," *Bollettino di Italianistica* 3, no. 1 (2006): 73–111.

8. Justin Steinberg, *Accounting for Dante: Urban Readers and Writers in Late Medieval Italy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 146.

9. See Teodolinda Barolini, "'Only Historicize': History, Material Culture (Food, Clothes, Books), and the Future of Dante Studies," *Dante Studies* 127 (2009): 37–54, where she writes of "the lack of historicizing that has been an abiding feature of Dante exegesis" and of how scholars are beginning now "to reverse that tradition, dismantling the high-culture peak on which the *Commedia* has long stood, grand but isolated from the very history on which it so ceaselessly ruminates" (48). This view is reiterated in Simon Gilson, "Historicism, Philology and the Text: An Interview with Teodolinda Barolini," *Italian Studies* 63, no. 1 (2008): 141–52: "... all areas of our understanding of Dante's thinking will benefit from greater historical contextualization" (150).

10. See Pietro Alighieri (3rd ed., 1359–64), cited from the Dartmouth Dante Project, as are all subsequent citations from commentaries where only the commentator's name and the date of publication are given.

11. See, for example, Benvenuto da Imola (1375–80): “Lineae istae sunt radii gratiarum Spiritus sancti exornantes universitatem ecclesiae nobilibus coloribus.”

12. See the Anonymus Lombardus (1325?), Benvenuto da Imola (1375–80), and Francesco da Buti (1385–95), whose glosses are discussed below. See also Vellutello (1544): “Ma noi teniamo che il poeta intendesse per li sette candelabri, i sette doni de lo Spirito santo . . . per segno de' quali, la chiesa tiene i sette sacramenti, Battesimo, Confirmatione, Ordine, Eucarestia, Penitentia, Matrimonio, Estrema unzione. E questi sono gli *stendali*, o vogliamoli dir liste.” He is followed by Bernardino Daniello (1547–68), *L'Esposizione di Bernardino Daniello da Lucca sopra la Comedia di Dante*, ed. Robert Hollander and Jeffrey Schnapp (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1989), 294. Several later commentators suggest that the *liste* could represent either the gifts of the Holy Spirit or the sacraments. See, for example, Tommaseo (1837 ed. of 1865); Oelsner (1899); and Fallani (1965): “Le sette liste luminose . . . significano i benefici effetti dei doni dello Spirito Santo o dei sacramenti.”

13. See Lombardi (1791–92): “Ma, oltre che non si capisce come dai doni dello Spirito santo abbiano origine i Sacramenti della Chiesa, si verrebbe poi anche a malamente fare, che i Sacramenti della nuova legge precedessero l'arrivo del misterioso grifone, cioè di Gesù Cristo.”

14. See Scartazzini (1872–82, 2nd ed., 1900). He is followed by Poletto (1894): “Or lasciando ogni altra interpretazione, non esclusa quella del Lombardi, sola vera reputo quella dello Scartazzini,” and, again, by Singleton (1970–75), who seems not to give a precise significance to the *liste* as distinct from the candelabra: “Such a figure, once we recognize that the seven lights represent the seven-fold Spirit of the Lord . . . , should call to mind the familiar passage in Isaiah (11:1–2) where the prophet foresees that the “virga de radice Iesse” (“rod out of the root of Jesse”), the Christ who is to come, shall blossom and the seven-fold Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.”

15. See, for example, Campi (1888–93); and Trucchi (1936): “Le sette liste, raffigurando, come i sette candelabri, i doni dello Spirito Santo.”

16. See Porena (1946–48): “Ma le sette liste colorate rappresentano con ogni probabilità i sette doni dello Spirito Santo di cui parla Isaia (11.2–3) citato da Dante nel *Convivio* (4.21.12), considerati qui come provenienti dal settemplice spirito di Dio figurato nei sette candelabri.” See also the recent contributions by Lino Pertile and Simone Marchesi discussed below.

17. See, for example, Tozer (1901); Carroll (1904); Casini and Barbi (1921); Steiner (1921); Provenzal (1938); Pietrobono (1924–30). Umberto and Reggio (1979), followed by Fosca (2003–6), also note that the *liste* have been read as symbolizing the seven beatitudes: “Per altri (Cicchitto) i sette doni sarebbero simboleggiati dai candelabri, e le sette liste sarebbero invece le sette Beatitudini.” Torracca (1905) is an outlier insofar as he views the *liste* as spiritual “rewards”: “i candelabri corrispondono alle beatitudini . . . , le fiammelle ai meriti, le liste {v.77} belle, di lunghezza infinita, ai premi.”

18. See Porena (1946–48), cited above in note 16; and Dante Alighieri, *Commedia*, vol. 2 *Purgatorio*, ed. Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi (Milan: Mondadori, 1994), 862: “queste sette liste . . . simboleggiano con ogni probabilità i sette doni dello Spirito Santo.”

19. Chimenz (1962): “Le liste luminose e iridate rappresenterebbero i sette doni dello Spirito Santo. . . . Secondo altri, i candelabri corrisponderebbero ai sette doni dello Spirito Santo, le liste alle sette beatitudini. Altri ancora danno altre interpretazioni; nessuna può dirsi sicura.”

20. Jacopo della Lana (1324–28); Pietro Alighieri (3rd ed.) (1359–64); Chiose Vernon (1390?); Gabriele (1525–41); Tasso (1555–68); and Portirelli (1804–5).

21. Daniello, *L'Esposizione*, 295; Venturi (1732); Longfellow (1867); Poletto (1894); Tozer (1901); Torracca (1905); Mestica (1909); Grabher (1934–36); Provenzal (1938); Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia*, vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, ed. Giuseppe Gialalone (Rome: Signorelli, 1988), 624; and Hollander (2000–2007).

22. Anonymus Lombardus (1325?): “septem listas, hoc est pariter 7 sacramenta ecclesie: idest quod nullum corumpebat”; Benvenuto da Imola (1375–80): “Et dicunt aliqui quod istae septem lineae sunt septem sacramenta ecclesiae . . . quia nullum sacramentum confundebat.”

23. "... imperò che tutte l'opere di Dio in verso li omini sono piene di verità e misericordia; dunqua si potrebbe dubitare, ponendo e figurando la ditta divisione dell'ale, che pure nell'uni fusse la iustizia e nelli altri la misericordia, e così si dividerebbe la iustizia de la misericordia nei sacramenti, che esser non può per la ragione detta. A che si dè rispondere che in quelli dell'ala ritta intese l'autore che la iustizia vada inanti a la misericordia, et in quelli da l'ala manca va inanti la misericordia a la iustizia; e però rimane vera la ragione ditta di sopra e la figurazione dell'autore, e però dice: Nulla guastava la ditta divisione."

24. Scartazzini (1872–82, 2nd ed., 1900) concurs and adds a supporting reference to Aquinas: "Land. e con lui altri vi leggono che l'Eucaristia è in mezzo tra la giustizia e la misericordia. Ma anche dato che le sette liste figurassero i sette sacramenti, la quarta non sarebbe l'Eucaristia che secondo gli scolastici è il terzo sacramento (*Petr. Lomb. Sent.*, lib. 4, dist. 2; *Thom. Aq. Sum. theol.* P. 3, qu. 65, art. 1, 2)."

25. Hermann Oelsner (1899) offers the Buti-Landino gloss alongside the following citation: "Looking to Pss. 36 and 57 and comparing verses 5 and 7 of the former with 1 and 11 of the latter, it seems that we must understand the wings as denoting—the one mercy, the other truth or justice. Then their position with regard to the bands will be made intelligible by a reference to Ps. 36.10: "O stretch forth thy mercy over those that know thee *scientia*, and thy justice over them that are of a right heart *consilium*" (Butler)." The source for this quotation is, presumably, *The Purgatory of Dante Alighieri*, ed. Arthur John Butler (London, 1892).

26. For examples, see Casini and Barbi (1921), and Pasquini and Quaglio (1982): "le ali dovrebbero figurare i massimi attributi divini, la misericordia e la giustizia."

27. See also Grandgent (1909–13), who accepts Carroll's reading of the *mezzana* as fortitude, stating that the "supernatural advent and return of Christ were entirely in accord with the prophecy of the gifts of the Holy Spirit."

28. "Allegoricamente, la divinità di Cristo, figurata nella parte alata del grifone, non rende superfluo alla sua Chiesa, figurata nel carro, il frutto di alcun de' doni dello Spirito Santo." Scartazzini comments drily: "Ma il *non intersecare* le liste ed il *non renderle superflue* sono due cose un po' troppo diverse."

29. Steiner (1921).

30. Del Lungo (1926). His phrasing becomes the basis of Attilio Momigliano's gloss (1946–51). For variations on this formula, see Sapegno (1955–57): "Perfetta concordia fra la dottrina di Gesù e la sapienza dello Spirito Santo"; and Pasquini and Quaglio (1982): "Profonda armonia fra la dottrina di Cristo e la virtù dello Spirito Santo."

31. See, for example, Daniele Mattalia (1960): "Gli attributi-doni di Dio non interferiscono l'un l'altro; s'integrano reciprocamente"; or Giovanni Fallani (1965): "gli effetti benefici dei doni dello Spirito Santo o dei sacramenti sono così uniti all'opera salvifica di Cristo."

32. Porena (1946–48): "Certamente tutto questo ha poi un significato simbolico, ma non è facile dir quale"; Chimenz (1962): "Il simbolo è inerente a un rapporto (quale, non è chiaro) tra Cristo, le liste (quale che sia il loro significato) e la Chiesa"; Bosco and Reggio (1979): "Si tratta evidentemente di un simbolo, ma il senso preciso ci sfugge ed è forse inutile tentare un'interpretazione." See also Gaetano Mariani, "Il canto ventinovesimo del *Purgatorio*," in his *La vita sospesa* (Naples: Liguori, 1978), 33–49 (45): "Simbologia non chiara che forse vuole sottolineare soltanto il perfetto accordo fra l'opera di Cristo e quella dello Spirito."

33. Paolo Brezzi, "La processione paradisiaca," in his *Lecture dantesche di argomento storico-politico* (Naples: Ferraro, 1983), 67–77 (73): "L'interpretazione di quest' ultimo simbolo è oscura e controversa: forse indica la perfetta concordia tra la dottrina di Cristo e quella dello Spirito Santo, forse il modo diverso ma non antagonistico di operare che l'uno e l'altro hanno, forse è soltanto un gusto troppo compiaciuto di descrizione minuziosa."

34. Armour, *Dante's Griffin*, 165: "The fact that its wings pass between the streamers of light, doing them no harm, and extend upwards out of sight shows that in its aquiline aspects this Rome is, in fact, heavenly and divine, originating in God's will and Justice."

35. Cristaldi, "Per dissimilia," 80–82.

36. Her only comment, although by no means uninteresting, is to point out that the verb “fendere” in line 111 is synonymous with the “discindere” that Dante employs in *Purgatorio* 32.43 to refer to the fact that the *grifon* inflicts no damage on the tree. See “The Rainbow and the Griffin,” 109–110. On some other occasion, it will be helpful to think about this parallel and to ponder, for example, if it really makes sense to read the *grifon* as Christ when its principal virtue seems to consist in refraining from causing harm.

37. *La puttana e il gigante*, 44–50 (50): “Lungi dallo svolgere una funzione puramente decorativa, per quanto solenne, i candelabri annunciano fin dall’inizio della rappresentazione il mistero della redenzione che è al suo centro.”

38. Simone Marchesi, “Dante, Virgilio (e Agostino) di fronte ai sette candelabri: *Purgatorio* 29.43–57,” *Electronic Bulletin of the Dante Society of America* (December 9, 2002). For a fuller treatment of Dante’s relationship to Augustine, see now Marchesi’s *Dante and Augustine: Linguistics, Poetics, Hermeneutics*, Toronto Italian Studies (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

39. Carroll (1904) remarks, quite rightly, that it is “easier to see that we have here a very definite piece of symbolism than to feel sure of its interpretation.”

40. Cristaldi, “Per dissimilia,” 80–81.

41. On the presence in Canto 29 of “una sorta di “litania numerale,” in sé quasi di effetto magico, di suggestione incantatoria, rituale”, see Calenda, “Incrispature,” 277–78, who, at the same time, also views Dante as “impegnato . . . di volta in volta ad analizzare, a scomporre le diverse serie che formano il corteo.” The enumerative quality of the poetry thus results in a “catalogo visionario analiticamente scandito.” See also Aldo Vallone, “*Purgatorio* XXIX,” in his *Strutture e modulazioni nella “Divina Commedia”* (Florence: Olschki, 1990), 135–50 (137), who remarks that “il numero è una costante nel canto.”

42. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy, Purgatorio*, vol. 2: *Commentary*, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 718–19.

43. It is easy to imagine how Singleton with his penchant for numbers might have been drawn to Scartazzini’s arithmetical approach. His fascination with the possibility that Dante employed number symbolism in the structuring of his poetry led to the well-known essay, “The Poet’s Number at the Center,” *MLN* 80 (1965): 1–10 (reprinted in *Essays in the Numerical Criticism of Medieval Literature*, ed. Caroline D. Eckhardt [Lewisburg, Penn: Bucknell University Press, 1980], 79–90). For a skeptical response, see Richard J. Pegis, “Numerology and Probability in Dante,” *Medieval Studies* 29 (1967): 370–73, which in its turn provoked a defense of Singleton’s thesis on the part of J. L. Logan, “The Poet’s Central Numbers,” *MLN* 86, no. 1 (January 1971): 95–98. Among the many studies devoted to the topic of numerology in Dante are the following: H. Candler, “On the Symbolic Use of Number in the *Divina Commedia* and Elsewhere,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, second series, 30 (1910): 1–29; Vincent Foster Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning, and Influence on Thought and Expression* (1938; repr., New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1969), 136–201; Gian Roberto Sarolli, “Numero,” in *Enciclopedia dantesca*, ed. Umberto Bosco, 6 vols (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1970–1978), 4.87–96; idem, *Analitica della “Divina Commedia”* (Bari: Adriatica, 1974); Manfred Hardt, *Die Zahl in der “Divina Commedia”* (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1973); idem, “Zur Zahlenpoetik Dantes,” in *Dante Alighieri 1985: In memoriam Hermann Gmelin*, ed. Richard Baum and Willi Hirdt (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1985), 149–67; idem, “Dante and Arithmetic,” in *The “Divine Comedy” and the Encyclopedia of the Arts and Sciences*, ed. Giuseppe Di Scipio and Aldo Scaglione (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1988), 81–94; and idem, “I numeri e le scritture crittografiche nella *Divina Commedia*,” in *Dante e la scienza. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi “Dante e la scienza” organizzato dall’Opera di Dante e dalla Biblioteca classense di Ravenna, Ravenna, 28–30 maggio 1993*, ed. Patrick Boyde and Vittorio Russo (Ravenna: Longo, 1995), 71–90; John J. Guzzardo, *Dante: Numerological Studies* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987); Cinzia Bianchi, “Rodolfo Benini: Un’interpretazione in chiave numerologica della *Divina Commedia*,” in *L’idea deforme: interpretazioni esoteriche di Dante*, ed. Maria Pia Pozzato (Milan: Bompiani, 1989), 191–225; Amerigo Fabbri, “Sul numero nella *Divina Commedia*,” *Linguistica e letteratura* 15 (1990): 135–89; Betty Vanderwielen, “The Significance of Numbers in the Structuring of Dante’s *Commedia*,” in *Medieval Numerology: A Book of Essays*, ed. Robert R. Surles (New York: Garland, 1993), 77–91; and

Richard Lansing, "Numerology," in *The Dante Encyclopedia*, ed. Richard Lansing (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 2000), 653–57.

44. For Chiavacci Leonardi, *Purgatorio*, 868, Scartazzini-Singleton seems to offer "la migliore interpretazione" and she tries to spin the idea into something plausible by suggesting that Dante's intention is to symbolize how "il legame tra l'uomo Cristo e Dio Padre—figurato nelle ali che penetrano alte nel cielo—mantiene intatte in lui sia la divinità che l'umanità." A very similar gloss is given by Nicola Fosca (2003–6): "La lettura più attendibile sembra quella di Scartazzini . . . il legame tra Cristo-uomo e il Padre (raffigurato dalle ali) preserva in lui sia la divinità che l'umanità." That is, it is the link between the Son and the Father that preserves both Christ's divinity and his humanity. But one wonders what would it mean for either of these elements of Christ's nature to lose their integrity. How could Christ's divinity or humanity be rendered less "intact"?

45. In his note to *Purgatorio* 29.50, Scartazzini writes: "Sette è composto di tre, che è il numero della Deità, e quattro che è il numero del mondo. Tre e quattro unendosi in sette in un numero solo, ne segue che sette figura l'unione di Dio e del mondo, e in generale concordia ed armonia." For the history of this tradition, he refers both here and in his note to line 110 to Karl Christian Wilhelm Felix von Bähr, *Symbolik des Mosaïschen cultus*, 2 vols. (Heidelberg: Mohr, 1837–39), 1:155–74; 187–202; 2:537 and 562. For another, equally unconvincing, attempt to ascribe theological significance to the numbers, see Luigi Pietrobono (1924–30): "Onde le due ali del Grifone con le lista di mezzo, e le liste di ogni lato prese per sé, vengono a formare tre gruppi, ognuno dei quali è uno e trino; e tutte insieme, ali e liste, fanno nove, che è il numero del miracolo. "Lo tre è fattore per se medesimo del nove, e lo fattore per se medesimo de li miracoli è tre, cioè Padre Figliuolo e Spirito Santo, li quali sono tre e uno" (VN 29.3)." Line 111 is read as signifying that "il Padre nulla toglie alla perfezione del Figlio o a quella dello Spirito; ché l'armonia più profonda regna nell'"altissimo e congiuntissimo consistorio de la Trinitade" (Conv. 4.5.3)."

46. For the number 7 as the "number of man . . . because man, the bridge between creator and creation, is made of the four corruptible elements plus will, intellect, and memory, or love of God through heart, soul, and mind," see Christian Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's "Comedy"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 137, with references to Macrobius, *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis*, 1.6.62, and Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, 2.16.25. For further references to examples in Ambrose, Augustine and others of "the identification of the spiritual-temporal duality with the archetypal numbers, 3 and 4," see Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism*, 83–85.

47. Calenda, "Incrispature soggettive," 265, rightly I think, dismisses Singleton's thesis as somewhat "macchinoso" (i.e., "excessively complex"). Although he does explicitly address the question of the *grifon-liste* nexus, Calenda's treatment of lines 109–11 is cursory and consists essentially in a reiteration of the standard view that the intersection of the wings and airstreamers represents the harmonious relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit: "Le ali raffigurano la perfetta armonia tra la seconda e la terza persona della Trinità."

48. Vallone, *Strutture e modulazioni*, 142–43, reads the griffin's wings in terms of other symmetrically arranged pairs: "Le due ali . . . dividono le proiezioni luminose dei candelabri in due gruppi di tre e tre. Se così due sono questi gruppi, due sono le ruote del carro e due i gruppi delle donne ai lati." In this case, though, the emphasis on symmetry elides the possibility that the "mezzana" is as significant as the groups that frame it.

49. Federico Bucci, "Dante e la Domenica delle Palme: alcune ipotesi sulla natura biblico-rituale della processione edenica," *La Cultura* 43, no. 3 (2005): 469–79 (471–72): "il troppo alto rilievo cronologico delle fonti slitta la relazione sul piano dell'improbabilità" (472). It is not clear whether the problems posed by "la diversità formale delle parti" pertain to the griffin's wings or to the argument Bucci has just made about a possible connection between Dante's female personifications of the virtues and the fact that the candles "dividuntur . . . quatuor ad dextram et tres ad sinistram." References for the liturgical texts cited are, respectively: Symphosii Amalarii, *De ecclesiasticis officiis libri quatuor*, in PL 105, coll. 985–1242 (bk. 3, chap. 7 ("De cereis"); coll. 1114–15); and *Ordines Romani*, in *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen âge*, ed. M. Andrieu (Louvain: Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense, 1931–61).

50. On allusions to the liturgy in the *Commedia*, see Erminia Ardisino, "I canti liturgici nel *Purgatorio* dantesco," *Dante Studies* 108 (1990): 39–65 (and 57–61 on the Earthly Paradise); John C. Barnes, "Vestiges of the Liturgy in Dante's *Comedy*," in *Dante and the Middle Ages: Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. John C. Barnes and Cormac Ó'Cuilleánáin (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1995), 231–70, which includes "a list of obvious or speculative liturgical allusions" (264–69); and Matthew Treherne, "Liturgical Personhood: Creation, Penitence, and Praise," in *Dante's "Commedia": Theology as Poetry*, ed. Vittorio Montemaggi and Matthew Treherne (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 131–60. Of particular relevance to political readings of the grifon is Ronald L. Martinez, "The Poetics of Advent Liturgies: Dante's *Vita Nova* and *Purgatorio*," in *Le culture di Dante: studi in onore di Robert Hollander, Atti del quarto Seminario dantesco internazionale, University of Notre Dame (Ind.), USA, 25–27 September 2003*, ed. Michelangelo Picone, Theodore J. Cachey Jr., and Margherita Mesirca. Quaderni della Rassegna, 39 (Florence: Cesati, 2004), 271–304, a highly suggestive study which explores the implications for both the *Vita Nuova* and *Purgatorio* 29 of parallels between the sacred liturgy of Advent in the Church and the "secular liturgy" of the *adventus Caesaris*, the triumphal entry into a city of an Emperor (see especially 271–74 and 289–99).

51. See Alfredo Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, trans. by G. B. Klein (Florence: Le Monnier, 1940), 1.26. This classic study is a translation of *Die Florentiner Wollentuchindustrie vom vierzehnten bis zum sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, the first volume of *Studien aus der Florentiner Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 2 vols. (1901–8; repr., Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1969). For the seven *arti maggiori* in 1266, see also Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, 1.432 (bk. 8.13). Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, 1.40–42, notes that from 1289 the five *arti medie* were on occasion added to the seven to give twelve *arti maggiori*. Although the oligarchy known as the *popolo grasso* resisted attempts to increase the access to power of the lower-ranking guilds, the *Ordinamenti di Giustizia* of 1293 refer to "xij Maiores Artes." See *Ordinamenti di giustizia, 1293–1993: Florentia Mater*, with an introduction by Franco Cardini (Florence: SP 44, 1993), 38.

52. See Gaetano Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani in Firenze dal 1280 al 1295* (Turin: Einaudi, 1960), 43, and 42–48 for a general discussion of the *arti maggiori*. Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, 1.34, comments that the *Giudici e Notai* did not contribute a priori to the first six-member priorate of 1282 because this guild "veramente non apparteneva alla classe borghese." A categorization of the guilds along slightly different lines, giving perhaps a division of 3 + 4, is offered by William Anderson, *Dante the Maker* (London: Hutchinson, 1983), 64, where he lists the seven *arti maggiori* which in 1282 become eligible to participate in government: "the medical and legal professions, the bankers, and the entrepreneurial associations of the silk workers, the skimmers sc. Vaiai e Pellicciai, and the two woolen institutions." On the history of the guilds, see also Edgcumbe Staley, *The Guilds of Florence* (1906; repr., New York: Blom, 1967).

53. See Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, 2.274–75: "Alquanto in disparte rimase, in tutto quell'ordinamento artigiano frutto tutto della concezione di una civiltà borghese, l'arte dei Giudici e Notai, verso cui il pubblico fiorentino guardò sempre con una certa diffidenza mista a riverenza." On the social position of notaries, see also Franco Cardini, "Alfabetismo e livelli di cultura nell'età comunale," *Quaderni storici* 13 (1978): 488–522 (497–505). On Dante and notaries, see Steinberg, *Accounting for Dante*.

54. On the existence in Florence of *Piores Artium* from the early Trecento, see Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani*, 110. Staley, *Guilds of Florence*, 41–42, refers to a treaty of 1204 between Florence and Siena as the earliest document to bear the signatures of the "Priors of the Trades or Guilds."

55. On the priorate of 1266, see Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani*, 111; 291–93; Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, 1.26–30; and John M. Najemy, *A History of Florence 1200–1575* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006), 74–75.

56. See Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, 1.532–33: "E' primi priori dell'arti furono tre . . . e per gli altri due mesi seguenti ne chiamarono 6, uno per sesto, e agiunsono alle dette tre maggiori arti l'arte de' medici e speziali, e l'arte di porte Sante Marie, e quella de' vaiai e pillicciai" (bk. 8.79). Nicola Ottokar, *Il Comune di Firenze all'fine del Duecento*, 2nd ed., with an introduction by Ernesto Sestan (Turin: Einaudi, 1962), 17, argues that Villani's description of the first priors as representatives of three guilds is misleading and that Dino Compagni is more reliable in his assertion that the first priors

were simply "tre cittadini capi dell'Arti," in other words "esponenti e capi di tutto il mondo artigiano." For accounts of the priorate of 1282, see Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani*, 111–16; John M. Najemy, *Corporatism and Consensus in Florentine Electoral Politics, 1280–1400* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 17–19; and Najemy, *History of Florence*, 76–81.

57. Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, 1.36.

58. Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani*, 111.

59. See Najemy, *Corporatism and Consensus*, 81–82, 88. The number of priors increased to eleven "for nine two-month terms until mid-October 1314." In October 1316, the pro-Angevin party added a further six priors to the seven-member Signoria elected by the previous priorate to give a total of thirteen. See Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, 2.283–84 (bk. 10.79). But the lists Najemy gives for 1318–1323 indicate that all the priorates in this period again consisted of six members.

60. Najemy, *History of Florence*, 82. On the *Ordinamenti di Giustizia*, see also Antonio Panella, *Storia di Firenze*, 2nd ed., with new introduction and bibliography by Franco Cardini (Florence: Le Lettere, 1984), 64–68.

61. Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani*, 188.

62. Ibid., 197–98; and *Ordinamenti di giustizia, 1293–1993*, 46–47: "Et ipsi Priores omnes cum Vexillifero Iustitie insimul morari, stare, dormire et conmedere debeant in una domo. . . . Et habeat dictus Vexillifer officium et vocem inter Priores sicut unus ex Prioribus, et cum eis moretur et comedat et dormiat prout et sicut Priores morantur et faciunt" (*Rubrica* 3 and 4). See also Najemy, *History of Florence*, 84: "the Standardbearer of Justice, added to the priorate as the seventh member of the executive magistracy . . . a participant with equal voting rights in the deliberations of the priors"; and Najemy, *Corporatism and Consensus*, 45, which also outlines the procedure for the election of the *gonfaloniere*. For the election of the first *gonfaloniere* after the promulgation of the *Ordinamenti*, see Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, 2.10 (bk. 9.1). Ottokar, *Comune di Firenze*, 214, corrects an error in Robert Davidsohn, *Geschichte von Florenz*, 4 vols (Berlin: Mittler, 1896–1927), 2:2, 559; and 4:1, 96, where he asserts that for the duration of four priorates after July 1295 the office of *gonfaloniere della giustizia* "sarebbe stato affidato . . . ad un collegio di sei cittadini." Ottokar points out that Davidsohn had misread the expression "habere voces in vexilliferatus officio" and that the relevant passages in the *Consulte* in fact refer not to six elected officials but to six candidates.

63. Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani*, 223–24: "È questo un corollario di quelle disposizioni degli Ordinamenti del gennaio che parificavano la condizione del Gonfaloniere a quella dei Priori."

64. Ibid., 176. This information can be found in any number of general histories of Florence. See, for example, the standard works by Schevill and Villari cited in notes 66 and 67 below, and Paul G. Ruggiers, *Florence in the Age of Dante* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1964), 11–12: "Especially interesting is the institution of a seventh prior, called the Gonfalonier of Justice. . . . This seventh prior. . . ." On the other hand, the highly selective translation of the *Ordinances* which appears in *Major Problems in the History of the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Benjamin G. Kohl and Alison Andrews Smith (Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1995), 139–42, includes no passages which refer to the close relationship between the priors and the *gonfaloniere*, and so virtually elides the latter's crucial role in the new government.

65. Dino Compagni, *Cronica delle cose occorrenti ne' tempi suoi*, ed. Guido Bezzola, 3rd ed. (Milan: Rizzoli, 2008), 70. For an English translation of this passage, see Dino Compagni, *Chronicle of Florence*, ed. Daniel E. Bornstein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 14: "They added to their office of Priors an office with the same authority as the others which they called the Standard-bearer of Justice."

66. Ferdinand Schevill, *History of Florence: From the Founding of the City through the Renaissance* (London: Bell, 1936), 158.

67. Pasquale Villari, *The First Two Centuries of Florentine History: The Republic and Parties at the Time of Dante*, trans. by Linda Villari (London: Unwin, 1905), 454: "He was elected on precisely the same terms as the Priors, saving that he might return to office after one year instead of two; he lived with the Priors as *primus inter pares*; he received the same honorarium of ten *soldi* per day, expenses included, so that he was practically unremunerated. But having higher attributes in the eyes of the law, he became speedily and of necessity the chief of the Signory." The phrase "*primus inter pares*"

is also used by Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, 1.45, who notes that the "carica" of the *gonfaloniere* was created in 1289 but only received its "sanzione statutaria" in 1293.

68. See also, Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, 2.10: "E la 'nsegna del detto popolo e gonfalone fu ordinato il campo bianco e la croce vermiglia" (bk. 9.1).

69. John M. Najemy, "The Dialogue of Power in Florentine Politics," in *City States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy: Athens and Rome, Florence and Venice*, ed. Anthony Molho, Kurt Raaflaub, and Julia Emlen (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1991), 269–88 (276 and 287).

70. John M. Najemy, "Dante and Florence," in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 80–99 (92): "Here Dante has gathered the characteristic terms of the *popolo's* discourse of politics, clustered around and following the hammering repetition of 'popol tuo': 'giustizia,' 'consiglio,' 'comune,' 'leggi,' 'civili,' 'viver bene,' 'provedimenti,' 'ufficio,' and 'membre.'" On *Purgatorio* 6, see Aurelio Roncaglia, "Il canto VI del *Purgatorio*," *Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana* 60 (1956): 409–26; Giovanni Gentile, "Il Canto VI del *Purgatorio*," in *Lecture dantesche*, ed. Giovanni Getto, 2nd ed. (Florence: Sansoni, 1964), 2.787–805; Alberto Varvaro, "Il Canto VI del *Purgatorio*," in *Purgatorio: Letture degli anni 1976–1979 tenute nella Casa di Dante in Roma*, ed. Silvio Zennaro (Rome: Bonacci, 1981), 123–33; Zygmunt G. Barański, "Purgatorio VI," in *Dante's 'Divine Comedy.' Introductory Readings. II: 'Purgatorio.' Special Issue: Lectura Dantis Virginiana*, vol. 2, ed. Tibor Wlassics, *Lectura Dantis*, 12: Supplement (1993): 80–97; John A. Scott, *Political Purgatory*, 96–127; and Maria Picchio Simonelli, "Canto VI: Abject Italy," in *Lectura Dantis: Purgatorio. A Canto-by-Canto Commentary*, ed. Allen Mandelbaum, Anthony Oldcorn, and Charles Ross (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 56–64.

71. Najemy, "Dante and Florence," 93–96.

72. Najemy, *History of Florence*, 86–87.

73. Salvermini, *Magnati e popolani*, 26, describes the priorate, the *Ordinamenti* and the standard-bearer as the "istituzioni intorno alle quali si raccoglie la vita del Comune e che diventano come il simbolo di esso." And see also John M. Najemy, "Guild Republicanism in Trecento Florence: The Successes and Ultimate Failure of Corporate Politics," *American Historical Review* 84 (1979): 53–71 (58): "In Florence, the guilds did not content themselves with achieving the condition of an 'estate' or 'order' within the commune. They proceeded instead to a third stage in which the very sovereignty of the commune was absorbed by the corporate federation itself."

74. The first, Trifon Gabriele (1525–41), referred to religious processions: "sono quelli stendardi che si portan in processione, ma proprio quelli che portan i frati," but the other two commentators were less specific. See Daniello, *L'Espositione*, 294: "portati stendardi & gonfaloni," and Torquato Tasso (1555–68): "*Pennelli*, stendali." For examples of the use of "pennello" to mean "banderuola" or "gonfalone," see Isidoro Del Lungo, *Dal secolo e dal poema di Dante: altri ritratti e studi* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1898), 523–25. Casini and Barbi (1921) refer to an example in Guido delle Colonne (see line 65 of "Amor che lungiamente"). Later commentators sympathetic to the sixteenth-century gloss include Costa (1819–21): "avevano sembianza di banderuole distese"; Vincenzo Monti, *Proposta di alcune correzioni ed aggiunte al Vocabolario della Crusca* (Milan: Dall'Imperiale Regia Stamperia, 1824), vol. 3, part 2, 38–43; Niccolò Tommaseo (1837 ed. of 1865): "banderuole tese"; Del Lungo, *Dal secolo*, 512–25 ("Panelli, pannelli, pennelli: Veridica istoria di un'allucinazione erudite"); and Enrico Mestica (1909): "in forma di stendardi . . . spiegati al vento quando si portano per via." Scartazzini (1872–82, 2nd ed., 1900) lists twenty commentators who concur with Daniello and Costa.

75. Besides the commentators mentioned below, see the following for rejections of the "stendardi" reading: Francesco Del Furia, "Esame della spiegazione data dal Daniello e da altri moderni ad un passo del canto XXIX del *Purgatorio*," *Atti dell'Imperiale e Reale Accademia della Crusca* 3 (1829): 353–72; and Carlo Grabher (1934–36). The traditional reading is also favored by Andreoli (1856), Bianchi (1868), Poletto (1894), Grandgent (1909–13), Steiner (1921), Scartazzini and Vandelli (1929), Mattalia (1960), and Singleton (1970–75).

76. See Provenzal (1938): "il mazzetto di setole del pennello piegato da una parte ha proprio la figura della fiamma di una candela mossa dal vento"; and Porena (1946–48): "Altri spiega pennelli per pennoncelli o bandierine sottili, che, poste in cima a un'asta, restino indietro orizzontalmente. Ma ciò avviene solo se il portabandiera corra o quando abbia vento in faccia: ora la processione si

muove lentissimamente e col vento alle spalle, onde non può certo far sorgere quella impressione. Per di più le liste di colore lasciate indietro dalle fiammelle sono lunghissime (vv. 80–81), e i pennoncelli sono corti."

77. See, for example, Luigi Pietrobono (1924–30) on line 79: "Appunto perché qui ricorre all'immagine di *stendardi*, si ha un motivo di più per credere che prima si dev'essere servito di un'altra"; and Sapegno (1955–57): "il Daniello, seguito da molti moderni, spiega invece tratti pennelli nel senso di 'portati stendardi e gonfaloni' . . . così intesa, la frase riuscirebbe una scialba anticipazione degli *ostendali* del v. 79." Latterly, this argument has been presented more as a question of syntax. See Chiavacci Leonardi, *Purgatorio*, 862: "Molti tuttavia hanno inteso *pennelli* per 'stendardi'. . . . Dante però chiamerà stendardi (*ostendali*, al v. 79) le liste colorate che le fiamme si lasciano dietro (che sembran veramente stendardi protesi al vento), mentre i *pennelli* sono le *fiammelle* stesse, soggetto non dubbio di *avean sembiante*"; and Fosca (2003–6): "Tuttavia soggetto di *avean sembiante* è fiammelle, cui si riferisce il sintagma tratti pennelli, mentre gli *ostendali* sono le liste colorate che le fiamme lasciano dietro di sé."

78. See, for example, Scartazzini (1872–82, 2nd ed., 1900): "Il *dipinto* {v.74} che precede, e i *colori* {v.77} che seguono risvegliano l'idea di linee tirate dal pittore col pennello, e non parlano certo in favore delle banderuole distese"; Provenzal (1938): "il pennello intriso di colore richiama le luci dei candelabri che, come vedremo, erano colorate"; Sapegno (1955–57): "tutti gli elementi dell'immagine (aere dipinto, liste, colori) sembran piuttosto convergere a render l'impressione di lunghe e sostenute pennellate"; and Fallani (1965): "l'immagine è tutta ricca di colore e dei termini più adatti e corrispondenti alla pittura."

79. See, for example, Chimenz (1962): "'banderuole, pennoncelli . . . tratti per l'aria,' come parrebbe confermare il termine *ostendali*, v. 79." Likewise, Calenda, "Incrasature soggettive," 264 n. 4, does not discount the "conforto che a una lettura 'pennelli' = 'stendardi' . . . possono portare gli *ostendali* del v. 78."

80. See Bosco and Reggio (1979): "Le difese dell'una o dell'altra interpretazione si può dire si equivalgano . . . ad ogni ragione, portata in sostegno della prima interpretazione, se ne potrebbe portare una altrettanto valida a sostegno della seconda. Bisogna dire che non esistono motivi assoluti per preferire l'una all'altra." Several other modern commentators also refrain from offering any definitive adjudication. See, for example, Casini and Barbi (1921), Chimenz (1962), and Giacalone, *Purgatorio*, 622.

81. The gloss in Chiavacci Leonardi, *Purgatorio*, 863, reads: "*ostendali*: stendardi . . . quali si vedono anche in antichi affreschi o pitture di cortei e processioni medievali."

82. See Benvenuto (1375–80): "*Ostendalia* enim appellantur in mundo signa imperatoris, quae ostenduntur quando vadit in expeditionem, et ista sunt signa summi imperatoris qui veniebat cum suo exercitu . . ."; and Serravalle (1416–17): "Ista ostendalia (ostendale proprie est vexillum Imperatorum: nam vicinus erat Imperator, scilicet Christus, in figura grifonis)." Benvenuto's gloss is cited by Singleton, *Purgatorio*, 710, for whom the "*ostendali*" are "banners or standards" which "would head a procession, possibly of some king or other royal personage."

83. See *Nuova cronica*, 1.432 (bk. 8.13). For accounts of this episode in the Florentine histories of Machiavelli and Scipione Ammirato, see the references in Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, 1.59.

84. Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, 2.229.

85. Richard C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 342–43; 346.

86. See Sergio Cristaldi, "Dante lettore e scriba della memoria," in *Dante in lettura*, ed. Giuseppe De Matteis (Ravenna: Longo, 2005), 63–131.

87. Trexler, *Public Life*, 256–57.

88. See, for example, Guido Mazzoni, *Almae luces, malae cruces: Studii danteschi* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1941), who draws parallels between the procession of *Purgatorio* 29 and the "teatro sacroprofano" of the "Processione penitenziale" which takes place every seven years in Guardia Sanframondi, a village in the hills overlooking Caserta (285–87: "La processione mistica nel Paradiso terrestre").

89. See Lizette Andrews Fisher, *Mystic Vision in the Grail Legend and in the Divine Comedy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1917), 92–113, who discusses what she calls “striking resemblances” (100) between Dante’s *sacra processione* and the festival of Corpus Christi, and Isobel Friedman, “La processione mistica di Dante: allegoria e iconografia nel canto XXIX del *Purgatorio*,” in *Dante e le forme dell’allegoresi*, ed. Michelangelo Picone (Ravenna: Longo, 1987), 125–48 (127): “Nei particolari di questo vivace corteo, si notano molte analogie.” For a more general treatment of Corpus Christi processions, see Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 243–71. She notes that “the only documented civic celebration of the feast in Italy” in the thirteenth century was that at Venice in 1295 (181).

90. Luciano Artusi and Silvano Gabbriellini, *Le feste di Firenze: dalla Candelora a Berlingaccio, dal Palio di San Giovanni al Calcio fiorentino, dallo Scoppio del Carro al Calendimaggio, un viaggio pittoresco attraverso i giochi, le festività, le ricorrenze tradizionali di questa bellissima città*, Quest’Italia: collana di storia, arte e folklore, 170 (Rome: Newton Compton, 1991), 178–80. The streets were canopied, and a “grande tela detta ‘cielo’” was stretched between Santa Reparata and the Baptistery (178). Staley, *Guilds of Florence*, 474, refers to Via di Calimala being “covered with a state awning of blue canvas richly embroidered” on the feast of San Giovanni, but notes that this was “originally put up in the year 1349.” With regard to the historical record, Trexler, *Public Life*, 253, observes that for the most part nothing remains to indicate how floats, or “festive machines,” evolved during the fourteenth century. Documentary sources for the thirteenth century are, presumably, even more exiguous.

91. Fisher, *Mystic Vision*, 96–97, and 102, draws attention to textual correspondences between Canto 29 and the eucharistic liturgy, and suggests that Beatrice is perhaps a “figure of the eucharistic Christ” (107). Likewise, Friedman, “La processione mistica,” 128, concurs with Helen Flanders Dunbar, *Symbolism in Medieval Thought and its Consummation in the ‘Divine Comedy’* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), 317, that such parallels “lasciano pensare che il significato principale della Processione Mistica sia essenzialmente eucaristico.” Naturally, she also sees the colors of the griffin as “sinonimi eucaristici” (141). On the liturgical language of *Purgatorio* 29, see also now the excellent analysis in Bucci, “Dante e la Domenica delle Palme.”

92. In their account of the Florentine Corpus Domini procession, Artusi and Gabbriellini, *Le feste di Firenze*, 172, list the guilds in the order in which they processed “accompagnati dai propri Gonfalonieri che recavano le insegne.” Antonio Ivan Pini, *Città, comuni e corporazioni nel medioevo italiano* (Bologna: CLUEB, 1986), 259–291 (“Le arti in processione. Professioni, prestigio e potere nelle città-stato dell’Italia padana medievale”), notes that all guild statutes in the Middle Ages stipulate “la partecipazione a qualche solenne processione con le accessorie disposizioni relative ai ceri da portare, agli standardi da sventolare.” (264).

93. Aldo Vallone, “La processione del XXIX del *Purgatorio* e il medievalismo di Dante,” *Deutsches Dante-Jahrbuch* 55–56 (1980–1981): 50–68 (64–65): “Dante non ci ha voluto dare una processione astratta, teorica, rituale. . . . Non solo ha rifiuto elementi rituali e religiosi con altri militari o addirittura municipalistici (il carroccio del comune di Milano è un dato di comune conoscenza e risonanza in quei tempi); ma ha osservato, nella sua e in altre città, i fatti pubblici, religiosi e civili, le cerimonie a cui danno luogo e la loro traduzione nella coscienza popolare. E di tutto fa esperienza e lascia traccia. . . . Ora è chiaro che Dante non ha inventato nulla: ha assunto tutti i particolari della realtà, rifiuti nel gusto e nell’esperienza culturale del Medioevo.”

94. On the overwhelming importance of such public ceremony, see Trexler, *Public Life*, 213: “The amount of money spent by families, confraternities, religious bodies, and governments is nothing short of astounding. The time that merchants and bureaucrats, common workers, and rulers expended in almost endless rounds of processions staggers the imagination.” Although Trexler’s study focuses on the celebrations of the “classical period of Florentine feste (1343–1480),” it seems reasonable to assume, on the evidence of Villani’s *Cronica* alone, that the value which Dante’s contemporaries attached to public processions was of a similar magnitude.

95. Trexler, *Public Life*, 213.

96. Ottimo (1333): “dice, che pignea l’aere, che si lasciava dietro, di VII colori. . . . Qui dice, che quello aere di sopra alli candellabri era distinto di VII vari colori, sì come è quello arco che fa il Sole.”

97. This problem was highlighted long ago by Herbert D. Austin, "Dante Notes XI: The Rainbow Colors," *MLN* 44 (1929): 315–18, who cited from a number of editions from the late nineteenth century onwards to illustrate how readily commentators had accepted the assumption that Dante's image was composed, in the words of A. J. Butler (1892), "of the seven prismatic colors." One instance not mentioned by Austin is the commentary of Tommaseo (1837 ed. of 1865), which reads "I colori dell'iride, cioè i sette colori principali."

98. Carl B. Boyer, *The Rainbow: From Myth to Mathematics*, with new color illustrations and commentary by Robert Greenler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 48–113 (102).

99. Compare Simone Tarud Bettini, "Dante e il doppio arcobaleno: una nota su poesia dantesca e scienza aristotelica," *L'Alighieri* 29 (2007): 143–54 (149), who views the *Purgatorio* 29 image as a probable precedent for Dante's departure from Aristotle in the simile of the "due archi paralleli e concolori" of *Paradiso* 12.10–21. On this question, see Simon Gilson, "Dante's Meteorological Optics: Refraction, Reflection, and the Rainbow," *Italian Studies* 52 (1997): 51–62 (58); and Simon Gilson, *Medieval Optics and Theories of Light in the Works of Dante* (Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 137–49.

100. See Dronke, "*Purgatorio* XXIX," 123–24.

101. See Pietro Alighieri (3rd ed.) (1359–64). Although Pietro refers to Aristotle—"de quo halo scribit Philosphus in II *Methaurorum*"—the rainbow colors he believes his father's poem alludes to (i.e., white, red and green) do not correspond exactly to the red, green and purple given in the *Meteorologica* 3.2.371b. I am much obliged to Richard Lansing for drawing my attention to this discrepancy. The same allegorical interpretation is found in the Codice cassinese (1350–75?). Austin, "Rainbow Colors," 318, proposes that the colors Dante had in mind were those of the seven Virtues of the mystical procession—red, white, green and purple.

102. Drawing on Bähr's *Symbolik des mosaïschen Cultus*, Scartazzini (1872–82, 2nd ed., 1900) postulated that the four colors were "celestè," "purpureo," "cocco, cioè è comune al fuoco e al sangue" and "bisso, color bianco," each with its own symbolic charge.

103. See, for example, Sapegno (1955–57): "Non è chiaro se ciascuna lista ripeta in sé tutti i colori dell'iride, ovvero se essi colori (quanti e quali?) siano ripartiti fra tutte le liste"; Fallani (1965): "rimane incerta l'interpretazione se ogni lista avesse tutti i colori dell'arcobaleno, o uno soltanto dei colori"; or Giacalone, *Purgatorio*, 622: "Non si capisce, però, se ogni lista abbia quei colori, o tutte insieme formino i colori dell'iride, dato che ai tempi di D. non si sapeva con certezza se quei colori fossero sette."

104. See Chimenz (1962): "non conoscendo la sua opinione, l'interpretazione del passo resta dubbia."

105. For a succinct statement of this dilemma, see Bosco and Reggio (1979): "Se non che è stata notata la stranezza che le sette strisce . . . abbiano i colori di tutta l'iride, cioè siano tutte uguali. Si è pensato perciò che ogni striscia abbia uno dei colori dell'arcobaleno, così da formare tutte insieme i sette colori dell'iride. Questa ultima interpretazione che sembrerebbe più logica, anche se il senso della frase è ambiguo, urta in una grave difficoltà: al tempo di Dante il numero dei colori dell'iride era incerto."

106. Porena (1946–48) argues that a seven-color rainbow would fit more naturally with Dante's symbolism and uses the Lana and Ottimo glosses to argue against the history of science hypothesis: "Ora par difficile che Dante avrebbe rappresentato i sette doni tutti dei medesimi colori, ed è tanto più naturale al suo simbolismo, e al simbolismo in genere, che a ciascuno abbia assegnato un colore diverso, e che il *tutte* significhi che i sette colori dell'iride risultavano dal loro insieme. Che ai tempi di Dante i colori dell'iride non si numerassero a sette (come è stato detto), non è vero. Proprio a proposito di questo passo, due dei più antichi commentatori, Jacopo della Lana e l'Ottimo, parlano dell'iride di sette colori." Chimenz (1962) recognizes that the "*tutte*" seems to indicate that "ciascuna lista avesse i colori dell'arcobaleno" but concurs with Porena that it is more likely that, for the sake of the symbolic meaning, Dante has assigned a different color to each *lista*. Chiavacci Leonardi, *Purgatorio*, 863, too appeals to the authority of the Ottimo in order to advocate the symbolic interpretation as the most "logical" option: "il loro numero di sette, il paragone stesso con l'iride, e il significato (sette diversi doni), porta ad intendere, con tutta logicità, che le sette liste appaiano nei

sette diversi colori, proprio come un arcobaleno." Fosca (2003–2006) also prefers the one color per *lista* version: "pare preferibile pensare che ognuna di esse sia di un colore diverso, anche se va detto che, al tempo di Dante, non c'era consenso sul numero dei colori dell'iride." For another recent endorsement of the Ottimo, see Calenda, "Incrispature soggettive," 276: "La frase "tutte in quei colori" non pare poter indicare altro che il fatto che ciascuna delle sette liste ha uno dei sette colori dell'iride, come spiega ancora una volta benissimo l'Ottimo."

107. Compare Mattalia (1960), who favors Buti's four-color allegory of precise correspondences because it accords better with the "medievale e dantesco universo, così ricco di arcani rapporti e rispondenze." Chiavacci Leonardi, *Purgatorio*, 863, argues for a correspondence between colors and gifts but only in the very vaguest terms: "la diversità dei colori rappresenta appunto il diverso carattere dei doni, la cui distinzione risale a Isaia (11.2–3) come ricorda Dante stesso in *Conv.* 4.21.12."

108. See, respectively, Pietrobono (1946 1924–30): "basta ripensare che la redenzione del mondo si doveva compiere per opera dello Spirito Santo, che manifesta la sua virtù nei sette doni, sementa in noi delle tre virtù teologali, fondamento della Chiesa, e delle quattro cardinali, fondamento dell'Impero"; and Tarud Bettini, "Dante e il doppio arcobaleno," 150, although the latter in the end rejects this possibility: "Ipotizzando che ognuna delle "liste" sia colorata di tutti questi tre colori, potremmo infatti immaginare che ognuna di esse alluda alla presenza della Trinità (simboleggiata dai colori stessi) all'interno della storia umana. . . . Si perderebbe così, tuttavia, . . . la perfetta corrispondenza fra i sette candelabri e i sette doni, prerogativa in primo luogo associata alla terza persona, più che all'intera Trinità." For Mattalia (1960), seeing each *lista* as rainbow-colored generates a reading which is "teologicamente più calzante", suggesting "molteplicità-unità, equivalenza e rapporto unitario, e ricchezza di ogni singolo (dono?)."

109. See Modesto, "The Rainbow and the Griffin," 115: "In view of Dante's conception of the two suns, pope and emperor, that are to light mankind's earthly and spiritual lives, this double rainbow can be seen as representative of the covenant that is to extend to all of God's plan for man."

110. Gilson, *Medieval Optics*, 142–43. For examples from Ovid, see *Metamorphoses* 1.270–71: "nuntia lunonis varios induta colores / . . . Iris" ("Iris, the messenger of Juno, clad in robes of many hues . . ."); and 11.589–90: ". . . induitur velamina mille colorum / Iris" ("Iris put on her cloak of a thousand hues"). Cited from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, with an English translation by Frank Justus Miller, revised by J. P. Goold, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1984), 1.20–21 and 2.162–63.

111. *Nuova Cronica*, 1.327–29 (bk. 7.39).

112. Compagni, *Cronica*, 1.4. See also Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, 1.533 (bk. 8.79), cited above in note 56, and Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani*, 112–13: "e si cominciò ad eleggerli cercando che essi rappresentassero non solo le Arti ma anche la città e procurando che nel Priorato, come in tutti gli altri uffici pubblici, ci fosse la rotazione dei sestieri. . . ." Salvemini also notes that the "terza rubrica" of the *Ordinamenti* of January 1293 stipulated that the "Priori saranno uno per sesto" (196).

113. See Giovanni De Vergottini, *Arti e popolo nella prima metà del sec. XIII* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1943), 20: "Noi non potremmo concepire una "societas populi" di questo periodo basata costituzionalmente sulle Arti, se queste non costituissero anche la base dell'organizzazione militare del popolo, se queste non risultassero cioè costituite da raggruppamenti militari corrispondenti alle Arti," cited by Emilio Cristiani, "Introduzione," in *I ceti dirigenti in Toscana dell'età comunale nei secoli XII e XIII. Comitato di studi sulla storia dei ceti dirigenti in Toscana. Atti del II Convegno, Firenze, 14–15 dicembre 1979* (Pisa: Pacini, 1982), 1–12 (4).

114. Najemy, *History of Florence*, 66–67.

115. On the *gonfaloni*, see Alberto Paolo Torri, *Gli stemmi e i gonfaloni delle provincie e dei comuni italiani*, 2 vols (Florence: Nocchioli, 1963).

116. See Friedman, "La processione mistica," 146, and the reproduction of folio 58v of MS Canonici ital. 108, a codex in the Bodleian Library, on p. 135 (plates 14 and 15). Friedman's essay is chiefly about the visual interpretation of Canto 29 which emerges from a group of illuminated manuscripts produced in Naples and southern Italy in the second half of the fourteenth century. Another interesting example she gives of an illuminator drawing on the civic rituals of the medieval communes occurs where she notes that both in Ms. Canonici ital. 108 and in another Trecento manuscript (MS Egerton 943), originating either in Padua or the Romagna, the "carro" is portrayed

as the four-wheeled *carroccio* "usato per trasportare un altare o gli standardi municipali durante le processioni solenni" or "come palladio a Firenze ed in altre città-stato italiane" (147).

117. On Dante's political career in these years, see Giorgio Petrocchi, *Vita di Dante* (Bari: Laterza, 1997), 77–90, and Stephen Bemrose, *A New Life of Dante* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 37–50.

118. Steinberg, *Accounting for Dante*, 146–47.

119. Drina Oldroyd, "Hunting the Griffin in Dante's *Purgatorio*," *Spunti e ricerche* 2 (1986): 46–65 (53). For an argument that links this passage from the *Aeneid* to the riddle of the "cinquecento diece e cinque," see Robert Hollander and Heather Russo, "*Purgatorio* 33.43: Dante's 515 and Virgil's 333," *Electronic Bulletin of the Dante Society of America* (March 27, 2003).

120. Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani*, 69, gives examples from Bologna and Perugia. See also Antony Black, *Guilds and Civil Society in European Political Thought from the Twelfth Century to the Present* (London: Methuen, 1984), 17, where he notes that the "pursuit of justice was the only moral meaning which jurists—or any learned men—saw in the craft guilds."

121. According to Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani*, 69, the innovation spread rapidly to "quasi tutti i Comuni dell'Italia centrale."

122. Najemy, *History of Florence*, 83.

123. The word "ingiustamente" occurs twice in the famous lament in the *Convivio* (1.3.3–4): "Ahi, piaciuto fosse al dispensatore dell'universo che la cagione de la mia scusa mai non fosse stata! ché né altri contra me avria fallato, né io sofferto avria pena *ingiustamente*, pena, dico, d'essilio e di povertate. Poi che fu piacere delli cittadini della bellissima e famosissima figlia di Roma, Fiorenza, di gittarmi fuori del suo dolce seno . . . peregrino, quasi mendicando, sono andato, mostrando contra mia voglia la piaga de la fortuna, che suole *ingiustamente* al piagato molte volte essere imputata" (my italics).

124. Ottokar, *Comune di Firenze*, 204–05, describes these provisions as "una consacrazione di atti extralegali, di rappresaglie di fatto delle masse agitate del popolo."

125. Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani*, 204.

126. Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, 2.78 (bk. 9.49).

127. Compagni, *Cronica*, 144–45 (bk. 2.19).

128. Compagni, *Cronica*, 158–59 (bk. 2.25).

129. On the establishment of peace as the "primary goal of political authority" in the *Monarchia*, see Matthew Kempshall, "Accidental Perfection: Ecclesiology and Political Thought in *Monarchia*," in *Dante and the Church: Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. Paolo Aquaviva and Jennifer Petrie (Dublin: Four Courts, 2007), 127–71 (142–43): "A world monarch . . . is necessary to provide a framework of peace and order within which individuals will then be free to secure their earthly happiness."

130. Keen, *Dante and the City*, 29–30, concludes her discussion of the Florentine foundation legend and Dante's devotion to the idea of a kinship between Florence and Rome, by remarking that the myth of the city's origins "provides a logical background to Dante's wider conviction that the aims and ideals of city life are compatible with acceptance, and indeed enjoyment, of imperial authority."

“Simile lordura,” Altra Bolgia: Authorial Conflation in *Inferno* 26

LEAH SCHWEBEL

While explaining the structure of Hell to the pilgrim Dante in *Inferno* 11, Virgil matches each type of fraud to its corresponding circle and bolgia. Yet after finding a home for every hypocrite, simonist, pimp, flatterer, sorcerer, and thief, Virgil glosses over the particular *peccati* of the eighth and ninth bolge as “simile lordura,”¹ literally meaning, “the same kind of trash.” While the sin associated with the ninth bolgia is later referred to three times as the dissemination of schism,² the sin of the eighth bolgia, where Ulysses and Diomedes suffer in one forked flame, is never explicitly accounted for.³ We witness their punishment but must extrapolate their crime.

When we descend to the eighth pouch fifteen cantos later, Virgil introduces Ulysses and Diomedes by explaining that these two are punished for their involvement in three acts: the fraud of the Trojan horse, the discovery of Achilles, and the theft of the Palladium:

e dentro da la lor fiamma si geme
l'agguato del caval che fè la porta
onde uscì de' Romani il gentil seme.
Piangevisi entro l'arte per che, morta,
Deïdamia ancor si duol d'Achille,
e del Palladio pena vi si porta.

(*Inf.* 26.58–60)

Here we have a concise list of Ulysses' and Diomedes's transgressions, yet as with Virgil's earlier discourse on the topography of Hell, this explanation falls short of illuminating the precise brand of fraud for which the

sinner are punished. Moreover, when we hear from Ulysses himself in the form of a monologue, the Greek hero mentions nothing of these three deeds. Instead, he portrays himself as a man afflicted by wanderlust, whose debt of familial piety does little to stave off his longing for knowledge and travel.

Readers of the *Commedia* have long responded to this canto by fixing on and then discarding a slew of prospective crimes for the fallen hero, running the gamut from original sin to pagan hubris, and often grafting Ulysses onto other figures from the *Commedia* in their efforts to find his appropriate niche. To name a few among the many available examples, Bruno Nardi has connected Ulysses's *folle volo* to Adam's *trapassar del segno*.⁴ John Freccero and Teodolinda Barolini have compared Ulysses's course to Dante's own poetic journey.⁵ Alternatively, Phillip Damon has argued for Ulysses as the anti-type of Cato,⁶ and David Thompson and James Truscott have read *Inferno* 26 retrospectively through Guido da Montefeltro's exchange with the quick-witted black cherub.⁷ It is tempting to latch onto any one of these plausible interpretations of Ulysses and so shut the book on the lacuna left by the poet in *Inferno* 11. Yet, as Mark Musa points out, a "hand-me-down category" is not suitable for one of the most memorable figures of the *Commedia*,⁸ and, as we will see, the ambiguity in Dante's characterization of Ulysses is vital to his character.

This essay does not attempt to answer the enigma that is Ulysses's preferred brand of fraud. However, I do suggest that our difficulty in determining his precise sin stems from two fundamental incongruities in *Inferno* 26, both of which pertain to Dante's sources for the episode. First, there is a discrepancy between the Ulysses introduced by Virgil and the Ulysses who narrates his shipwreck before the mountain of Purgatory—the latter is largely Dante's own invention, whereas the sinner whom Virgil condemns on the basis of his involvement in three acts is stitched together from an array of classical and medieval sources, including Virgil's *Aeneid*, Statius's *Achilleid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*, and Guido delle Colonne's *Historia destructionis Troiae*. Second, this line-up of sources is *itself* contradictory: it furnishes Dante with various interpretations of Ulysses's role in the Trojan War, the implications of which I explore below.

Focusing on Virgil's tripartite introduction, I aim to show that Dante invokes multiple, conflicting accounts of Ulysses only to conflate these accounts in a way that exacerbates the differences among them, exposing the fault lines along which his authors divide. In other words, rather than

reconcile the obvious inconsistencies in the Trojan writings by relying on a single source (or by combining sources that are at the very least compatible), Dante seems intent on highlighting the points at which his trusted *auctoritates* cross quills. How appropriate a form of *contrapasso* for the fraudulent Ulysses, then, that Dante sews together various accounts of the hero—whether they correspond or not—and throws him into a circle of Hell without a name, ensuring that we never know his real reason for being there. At first blush, this conflation of literary models may appear little more than an act of subversion, since Dante implies that his sources are nonauthoritative by dint of their own incongruity. However, it may likewise be an act of tribute to his forebears—a playful allusion to a classical model of allusion, one might say. Indeed, as an examination of their writings reveals, Dante's sources for this episode all rely on a similar strategy of allusive remodeling, hence the ever-changing face of Ulysses, and the many interpretations of his role in the fall of Troy. Dante's participation in this cycle may thus indicate his self-conscious placement of his poem within a literary tradition that is, at its core, based on textual revision, of which invention is just one more form. What is more, in the second part of *Inferno* 26, Dante performs a full-fledged regeneration, crafting a tale of Ulysses's shipwreck for which there is *no* literary precedent, and in the process altering indelibly the very genealogy from whence he was born. Thus beginning as a patchwork of ill-matched source texts, Ulysses emerges as a brilliant and cohesive vision, dying by water only to be reborn in a flame.

Exile and Escape in *Inferno* 26

The first of the three crimes Virgil attributes to Ulysses, "E dentro da la lor fiamma si geme/ l'agguato del caval che fé la porta / onde uscì de' Romani il gentil seme," begins as an explanation of Ulysses' and Diomedes's involvement in the plot to bring a wooden horse filled with enemies inside of Troy. However, these lines take an unexpected turn, shifting their focus from Ulysses to Aeneas and his escape from the city. This shift has the immediate result of creating something of a literary paradox out of Virgil's statement, in the sense that Ulysses is charged for a crime that ultimately concerns Aeneas.⁹ The secondary effect of this shift is more complicated. By presenting the plot of the horse as aberrant not in and of

itself, but because it creates the breach that then precipitates the escape of Aeneas, Dante registers alongside the Virgilian account of Rome's "gentil seme" the pseudepigraphic tradition as well, in which Aeneas flees from Troy as a traitor. As I suggest, Dante's allusion to this tradition is apparent in his choice of the word *uscir* rather than *essilio* to describe Aeneas's departure from Troy, as well as in his presentation of the breach in the walls as an internal, as opposed to an external encroachment.

Dante's reference to the escape of Aeneas would perhaps be less problematic if voiced by a different guide, but it is Virgil who speaks here, and on an event that the *Aeneid* no less testifies against. According to Virgil, a divinely inspired Aeneas leaves Troy in *exile*, with only his family to accompany him. Virgil speaks of Aeneas's "longa . . . exsilia" from home (*Aen.* 2.780),¹⁰ and, later in the epic, Aeneas recounts to Dido having seen his Trojan companions prepare to flee: "And here, astonished, I find that a vast number of new comrades has streamed in, mothers and men, a band gathered for exile."¹¹ Furthermore, Virgil describes the making of the breach in the walls of Troy as a penetrative act—a break-in, rather than the means to a getaway. Aeneas explains that in order to bring the horse within, "We part the walls and lay bare the city's battlements."¹² Then, "the fateful engine climbs our walls, big with arms."¹³ These walls in the *Aeneid* do not harbor an internal fugitive; rather, they defend Troy against external attack, and after they are breached, the city is left vulnerable. Dante, on the other hand, has Virgil describe the breach in the walls as the opening from which Aeneas breaks free ("la porta onde uscì de' Romani il gentil seme"), and in this way he has his guide betray the perspective of his own epic. Indeed, Dante's particular choice of the verb *uscire* to describe Aeneas's flight makes a willing agent of Aeneas in his departure from Troy and thus articulates the potential for this flight to be negative—Aeneas is abandoning his city as it falls.

Dante suggests that there is a substantial difference between "uscire" and "essilio" elsewhere in the *Commedia*. In Statius's first encounter with Virgil in *Purgatorio* 21, Dante indicates that whereas "uscire" involves the agency of the will, "essilio" does not. Explaining to his company why the earth has trembled beneath their feet, Stazio describes the upward movement of the soul as one of sheer willpower: "Prima vuol ben, ma non lascia il talento / che divina giustizia, contra voglia, / come fu al peccar, pone al tormento" (*Purg.* 21.261–66). It is this movement of the soul that provoked the quake. Reflecting on his salvation, which he insists

was spurred by a reading of the *Aeneid*, Stazio then claims that he would prolong his term in Purgatory by a year for the chance to have lived on earth during the lifetime of Virgil. Stazio invokes the verb *uscire* to explain this: "E per esser vivuto di là quando / visse Virgil, assentirei un sole / più che non deggio al mio *uscir* di bando" (*Purg.* 21.100–102; emphasis added). Deeply aware that the movement of the soul is impossible without the accord of the will, Stazio qualifies his period in Purgatory as one from which he will depart of his own accord. Only when a soul has paid due penance for its sins, not before, can the shade's desire transport him to a higher place. Meanwhile, earlier in this canto Virgil refers to his internment in Inferno as an exile. He remarks to Stazio: "Nel beato concilio / ti ponga in pace la verace corte / che me rilega ne l'eterno *essilio*" (*Purg.* 21.16–18; emphasis added). In this mention of his "eterno *essilio*" (in words that echo Aeneas's own "longa . . . *exsilia*" [*Aen.* 2.780]), Virgil reflects on the permanence of his journey—he cannot (and *will not*) attain a higher sphere, since it is beyond his capacity to do so. The discrepancy in *Purgatorio* 21 between Stazio's "uscir di bando" and Virgil's "eterno *essilio*" thus illustrates Dante's elaboration on two forms of movement, only one of which is wholly voluntary. Nor can we help but read *Inferno* 26 retrospectively with this distinction in mind, interpreting "l'agguato del caval" as anticipating Aeneas's intentional "uscir," as opposed to his divinely ordained "essilio."

The suggestion that Aeneas leaves Troy of his own volition is, of course, not original to Dante. It footnotes a prominent strand of medieval writings that position themselves in contrast to the canonic classical works on the Trojan War. I refer to the 'anti-Homeric' tradition, typified by Dares and Dictys's pseudepigraphical accounts, *De excidio Troiae historia* and the *Ephemeris belli Troiani*, respectively, as well as the medieval redactions of these texts, Benoit de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* and Guido delle Colonne's *Historia destructiones Troie*. These versions of the Troy story reject the writings of Homer, Virgil, and the other pagan poets as no more than fiction. Guido, for example, considers,

The failure of the great authors, Virgil, Ovid, and Homer, who were very deficient in describing the truth about the fall of Troy . . . especially the highest of poets, Virgil, whom nothing obscures.¹⁴

Guido announces that he will tell the true history of the Trojan War, as transcribed in the works of Dares and Dictys.¹⁵ Part of this true story is of

Aeneas's treachery. Aeneas and Antenor, "the acknowledged betrayers of their country,"¹⁶ conspire to bring about the fall of Troy. Following this, they take steps to *escape* from the city ("They themselves decided to leave Troy").¹⁷ So prevalent was this version of the story that an early commentator of Dante (1400[?]) glossed the poet's reference to "Romani il gentil seme" with an exposition of Aeneas's treachery, pointing us to "la verità" of the matter:

La verità fu che Antenore, Polidamas, Anchise et Enea, accozzati insieme una notte, pensorono di dare a' Greci la terra et tradire il re Priamo: mandorono quella medesima notte Polidamas a' Greci, che, s'egliano voleono assicurare loro et le loro case et genti, e' gli darebbono la terra. A' Greci piacque il fatto.¹⁸

Benvenuto da Imola, although not referring to Aeneas explicitly here, also uses the pseudepigraphic writings on Troy as a reference. Attempting to reconcile Ulysses's death at the mountain of Purgatory with earlier accounts of the hero, he comments that Dante's version of events has no precedent in the writings of Dares and Dictys:

That which this author writes of the death of Ulysses holds no truth either according to historical tradition nor the fictional poetry of Homer or of any other poet. . . . For, in the tradition of Greek Dictys and Dares Phrygius in Trojan history, Ulysses was killed by Telagonus.¹⁹

We may gather from these responses found in the commentary tradition that Dante and his readers considered the pseudepigraphic literature on Troy a valid, even authoritative, historical resource, despite its explicit contradiction of the classical poets.²⁰ Nor should we discount the possibility that Dante engages this literature in this context so as to create an internal dissonance in his poem.

For Dante, himself in exile when he wrote the *Commedia*, the contrast between Aeneas leaving Troy on divine orders as the savior of the Roman people and Aeneas fleeing from Troy as a traitor was no doubt severe. On the one hand, Dante's description of Aeneas as Rome's noble progenitor speaks directly to the *Aeneid* and its literary offspring.²¹ On the other hand, by referring to the opening from whence Aeneas "escapes," Dante engages a body of writing in which Aeneas flies from Troy in shame. Dante, it seems, is interested in laying bare *both* textual traditions within Virgil's single statement (which, as it turns out, has little to do with Ulysses). In doing so, Dante sifts the language of the *Aeneid* through the literature of an anti-Homeric tradition. Deftly combining both versions of the

story and consequently undermining the claims to *veritas* in both traditions, he attunes us to the multiplicity of sources surrounding Aeneas's journey from Troy to Italy, casting doubt on the "piety" of his fabled progenitor, and exposing the incongruity in the works of his poetic ancestors in the process.

Fraud and its Discovery in the *Achilleid*

The second crime for which Ulysses is punished is the grief of Deidamia: "Piangevisi entro l'arte per che, morta, / Deïdamia ancor si duol d'Achille." Here Virgil alludes to Ulysses's detection of Achilles on the island of Scyros, where his mother Thetis has disguised him as a maiden, away from the call of war. While at Scyros, Achilles falls in love with Deidamia, who is left to lament his absence when he departs for Troy. Ulysses identifies Achilles by placing instruments of battle alongside turbans, jewels, and other girlish trinkets. When the child is drawn to the tools of warfare, Ulysses identifies him as the hero.

Dante's source for this story is Statius's *Achilleid*. Like his reference to the fraud of the Trojan horse, however, Dante does not merely reproduce his author's words; instead, he shifts the perspective of this episode so that it no longer resonates with the original work. This shift is most apparent if we consider how Dante and Statius portray the detection of Achilles. For Dante, as we have seen, Ulysses's performance at Scyros earns him a one-way ticket to the bowels of Hell. In the *Achilleid*, by contrast, Ulysses is less the perpetrator of fraud than the agent of its discovery—he does not trick Achilles into leaving Scyros but merely provides the boy with an opportunity to throw off his "dishonorable robes" and act on his desire to fight.²² Accordingly, the momentum of the poem is toward the recuperation of Achilles from Scyros, and it is Thetis, not Ulysses, who is presented in a negative light. This sympathetic reading of Ulysses is, in turn, mirrored in the responses to the *Achilleid* found in the medieval commentary tradition.

As we are told repeatedly in the epic, it is the destiny of Achilles to bring about the fall of Illium—he is the "destined destroyer of great Troy."²³ Primed for battle from a young age, he soon becomes too wild for his tutor, the centaur Chiron, who admits that while

Formerly he was wont to endure my anger and listen eagerly to my commands nor wander far from my cave: now Ossa cannot contain him, nor the mighty Pelion and all the snows of Thessaly.²⁴

So raised as a warrior, Achilles naturally resists his mother's first attempts to clothe him in women's garb. Statius likens him to an unbroken horse that bristles in response to detainment:

Even so, should one try to subdue with earliest rein a horse full of mettlesome fire of ungoverned youth, having long delighted in stream and meadow and his own proud beauty, gives not his neck to the yoke, nor his fierce mouth to the bridle, and snorts with rage at passing beneath a master's sway and marvels that he learns another gait.²⁵

Only his lust for Deidamia can induce Achilles to submit to his mother's design. This desire is likewise described in animalistic terms. Upon seeing Deidamia from afar, Achilles responds like a raging bull: "He foams at the mouth with his first passion."²⁶ Indeed, it is still another *animalis passio* that provokes Achilles to reveal himself to Ulysses. Like a lion that yearns for freedom, Achilles thirsts for the armor he sees:

Forgotten were his mother's words, forgotten his secret love, and Troy fills all his breast. As a lion, torn from his mother's dugs, submits to be tamed and lets his mane be combed, and learns to have awe of man and not fly into a rage save when bidden, yet if but once the steel has glittered in his sight, his fealty is forsworn, and his tamer becomes his foe.²⁷

It should come as no surprise, then, that the figure most commonly identified with fraud in the *Achilleid* is she who is responsible for metamorphosing into a tender maiden this bucking horse, this foam-spewing bullock, or this savage lion: Achilles's mother, Thetis. Statius describes her as crafty and deceptive. She uses "false words" to convince Chiron to let her abscond with her son,²⁸ after which she trims Achilles's hair and alters his attire, even teaching him to practice a modest gait, so that the "crafty cunning of [her] enterprise" will not be lost.²⁹ Furthermore, after persuading the king of Scyros, Lycomedes, to take Achilles into custody, she lingers at the gate, implanting whispered secrets in her son's ear (*Achill.* 1.379–81). At first, Statius interrupts his story to ask, "What God endued the despairing mother with fraud and cunning?"³⁰ And later, when Lycomedes is fooled by the ruse, Statius does not scorn him, but again reflects on the fraud of Thetis: "who can resist when gods deceive?"³¹

Even Deidamia, in her grief, recognizes that the true deception lies not in the detection of Achilles, but in Thetis's original subterfuge. Statius writes, "In another chamber, [she] bewailed the discovery of the fraud."³²

As Harald Anderson has demonstrated in his study of the manuscripts of Statius,³³ medieval scholars found fault with Thetis's actions, interpreting her thwarted plan to conceal her son as a cautionary lesson against trying to outwit providence. In what Anderson has named the KP *accessus* (ca. 1100), this lesson is filed under the *utilitas* of the *Achilleid*: "It is futile to oppose fate as Thetis did," the commentator writes, "since we know that it was of no advantage to Thetis when she tried to go against them."³⁴ In the *Universitatis bruxellensis accessus* (ca. 1300), Thetis is again invoked as a negative exemplum, only here in the *finalis causa*, or objective, of the work. The commentator urges us to "take [from Thetis's failed plan] this lesson: that we might not go against divine will."³⁵ To provide one final example, in the *accessus* in Florence, BML, Plut. 38.10 (1394), the commentator writes that it is the *intentio auctoris* to dissuade us from acting like Thetis; that is, against the grain of providence.³⁶ These *accessus* tell us that it was not Thetis's use of fraud per se, but her attempt to outwit fate that medieval readers found problematic.

Perhaps because his actions were in accordance with providential design, medieval readers perceived Ulysses in a relatively favorable light; indeed, at times his behavior was even praised. In the Lincoln College *accessus*, for example, the commentator writes that Statius intended to inculcate morality and virtue in the reader by way of character models, and from Ulysses we may learn good counsel and prudence.³⁷ Another commentator glosses a reference to "acer Ulixes" (*Achill.* 1.866) by explaining that Ulysses is eloquent, cunning, and warlike.³⁸ Whereas Thetis's stubborn shrewdness meets with criticism, Ulysses's cleverness and practicality are deemed admirable qualities—qualities to be emulated, if possible, by the eager reader.

If we return to the *Achilleid*, we see that Statius distinguishes between the fraud of Thetis, who puts her personal grief before the destiny of her son, and the cunning of Ulysses, who uses a clever ruse to perform his martial duty. Accordingly, while both characters are described in similar terms—like Thetis, Ulysses is "crafty" and "of many wiles"³⁹—Statius does not condemn Ulysses for his shrewdness. To the contrary, from the very beginning of the epic, Statius aligns himself with Ulysses's purpose. He beseeches us,

Suffer me – for such is my desire – to recount the whole story of [Achilles], to summon him forth from his hiding-place in Scyros . . . and not to stop short at the dragging of Hector, but to lead the youth through the whole tale of Troy.⁴⁰

Moreover, whereas Neptune refuses to help Thetis protect her son because “the fates forbid it,”⁴¹ Apollo willingly reveals the boy’s hiding place to the Greeks (*Achill.* 1.532). Thus armed with divine knowledge of Achilles’s whereabouts, Ulysses still hesitates to search for the child, worried “[lest] the fates say nay [to his endeavor].”⁴² Diomedes must convince him with strong words and a plea for glory: “The Calydonian hero accosts the hesitating Ithacan: ‘Tis us that task summons.’”⁴³ That Ulysses ultimately performs his task *well*—that he is able to spy out Achilles among the mass of females at Scyros and convince him to fight at Troy—is only to his credit, the more so in light of the poet’s own wish to drag forth Achilles from hiding and throw him into battle, with the added support of the gods.

As Suzanne Hagedorn observes, fraud is everywhere in the *Achilleid*—indeed, fraud moves the plot forward, holds the Greek army back, and can be applied to nearly every character as a shorthand epithet.⁴⁴ However, whereas Hagedorn sees Ulysses as an ‘arch-deceiver’ of sorts (unlike Thetis, who “employs fraud *in bono*, in an attempt to save her son,” Ulysses and Diomedes “bring Achilles to the war that kill him”),⁴⁵ this is not, I argue, how Statius portrays him in the *Thebaid*. To the contrary, Ulysses is an instrument of fate, assigned the task of securing Achilles to bring him to Troy, and making him a hero in the process. Himself an erstwhile draft-dodger, Ulysses is the perfect man for the job. He prompts Achilles to recall his duty with pride, asking him, “Was it thou, Oh destined destroyer of great Troy, whom Danaan fleets and divine oracles are demanding, and War aroused is awaiting with unbarred portals.”⁴⁶ Attempting a new angle, Ulysses then reminds Achilles of his marital bond. What if his wife, and not Helen, had been abducted by Paris, “What if someone now were to carry off Deidamia from her native shores, and tear her from her lonely chamber in dire dismay and crying on the name of great Achilles?”⁴⁷ This is the final straw for Achilles, who acts according to his most immediate desire. Imagining Deidamia’s capture, he blushes red and grabs his sword, ready for the war that awaits him.

By manipulating Achilles’s sense of obligation to his wife and to his *patria*, Ulysses allows the boy to realize his destiny, a destiny that Thetis

attempted to thwart. At least in the *Achilleid*, therefore, Ulysses merits our praise. Yet Dante will have none of this: in what might best be described as an Ovidian turn, he refocuses the narrative to make Deidamia the tragic victim of the story. At the same time, he casts Ulysses as the villain who not only forces Achilles to abandon his family, but who also reveals that he is guilty of the same crime:

“né dolcezza di figlio, né la pieta
del vecchio padre, né 'l debito amore
lo qual dovea Penelopé far lieta,
vincer potero dentro a me l'ardore
ch'i' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto
e de li vizi umani e del valore.”

(*Inf.* 26.94–99)

Hagedorn has argued the importance of Statius's influence on Dante's own rendition of the hero—the former's “stylish ‘little speeches’ seem an altogether likely model” for the Ulysses of *Inferno* 26, who likewise forsakes his wife and his son.⁴⁸ Yet while the language of Ulysses's *orazion picciola* may stem from the *Achilleid*, the moral underpinning of *Inferno* 26 is entirely Dante's. For Statius, Thetis's disguising of her warrior son in “dishonorable robes” is the real “profanity” of the poem.⁴⁹ Compared to that of Ulysses, hers is the greater crime. Similarly, Deidamia's grief is secondary to Achilles's civic duties, which, on a larger scale, compel the boy to depart for Troy. For Dante, on the other hand, one cannot simply cast one's family aside—to do so is, in itself, a breach of *pietà*. He thus roundly condemns Ulysses, first for persuading Achilles to abandon Deidamia, and second for deserting his own wife and child. Yet, in order to punish Ulysses for the detection of Achilles—in order to amplify Deidamia's tragedy so that it looms larger than the Trojan War itself—Dante must warp the *Achilleid* for his narrative needs, pressing it into conflict with his own interpretation of the text.

The Splintered Tradition of the Palladium

Virgil's third justification for Ulysses's punishment, “e del Palladio pena vi si porta,” is by far the most ambiguous since it gestures only obliquely at Ulysses's involvement in the theft of the Palladium, a statue sacred to Minerva.⁵⁰ According to myth, Troy could not fall so long as this statue

remained within the city. Yet while all antique and medieval accounts agree that the statue was stolen and that Troy fell, they are at odds in identifying the perpetrator of that theft. Adding to this ambiguity is the splintered nature of the textual tradition concerning how the Palladium left the walls of Troy. As James Frazer notes, the versions of this story “differ from each other on various points,” and they are all “clearly inconsistent with each other.”⁵¹ The earliest accounts, found in the Greek epic cycle, do, for the most part, hold Ulysses and Diomedes responsible for the theft. For example, in the *Illias parva*, Ulysses sneaks into the city as a spy, where he conspires with Helen to steal the statue. Other early accounts maintain that Ulysses and Diomedes stole a spurious image of the Palladium, unaware that the original was housed elsewhere in the city.⁵² Among the principal versions of this episode available to Dante—Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*, and Guido delle Colonne’s *Historia*—none affirms with any certainty that Ulysses accomplishes the deed. To the contrary, implicit in these works is the suggestion that although Ulysses may traditionally be held responsible for the theft of the Palladium, there is no proof that he actually stole it.

In the *Aeneid* the explanation of the statue’s disappearance is shrouded in multiple layers of narration. Aeneas refers to the theft when he recounts a fraudulent speech Sinon made to the Trojans, convincing them to bring the horse within their walls. Sinon explains that the Trojan horse is the Greeks’ reparation for the Palladium, which he claims was stolen by Ulysses and Diomedes (*Aen.* 2.162–65). He warns the Trojans that if they destroy this gift then utter ruin will come to them.

Throughout his speech, Sinon refers disparagingly to “dirus Ulixes” (*Aen.* 2.261, 2.762). However, Sinon himself is Ulysses’s proxy, and his speech is artfully crafted to ally the Trojans to his position. There is thus “some irony” to “the insults . . . heaped on Ulysses,” as Mark Mirsky notes, since he is being “insulted by his own agent.”⁵³ Indeed, Aeneas himself blames the duplicitous Sinon for the fall of Troy (“Through such snares and craft of forsworn Sinon the story won belief, and we were ensnared by wiles and forced tears—we whom neither the son of Tydeus nor Achilles of Larissa laid low”),⁵⁴ a further incentive for us to question Sinon’s accusation.

Like the monster of fraud Geryon from *Inferno* 16–17, Virgil’s Sinon has “la faccia . . . d’uom giusto” (*Inf.* 17.10). He claims to think only of his sweet children and his aged father, whom he longs to see again (“nec

dulcis natos exoptatumque parentem" [*Aen.* 2.137–38]), a line that Dante inverts and gives to Ulysses for his admission of impiety ("né dolcezza di figlio, né la pietà / del vecchio padre . . ."). A master of rhetoric "in all its moods, despair, subtlety, humility, anger, appeals to pity,"⁵⁵ Sinon issues a speech of which Cicero would have been proud.⁵⁶ Himself in possession of all the guile that he attributes to Ulysses, Sinon weaves a web of irony: we cannot condemn the master of fraud himself, "dirus Ulixes," because his delegate is unworthy of our faith. By allowing Sinon, a man whose credibility is tainted by what we know of his insincerity, to play the accuser, Virgil thus leaves the question of who stole the Palladium unresolved.

The same ambiguity is apparent in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*. In both works Ovid preserves the opacity in the *Aeneid* with respect to the Palladium's disappearance. In the *Metamorphoses* Ulysses claims to be responsible for the theft, yet he does so in a public dispute with Ajax over who shall claim Achilles's arms, throughout which he makes many boastful statements about his martial accomplishments:

I stole away from the midst of the enemy the enshrined image of Phrygian Minerva . . . Why does Ulysses dare go out beyond the sentinels, commit himself to the darkness and, through the midst of cruel swords, enter not alone the walls of Troy but even the citadel's top, steal the goddess from the shrine and bear her captured image through the enemy? . . . On that night I gained the victory over Troy; at that moment did I conquer Pergama when I made it possible to conquer her.⁵⁷

Ulysses's rhetorical effusiveness here undermines the very content of his speech, and Ajax urges his audience to reflect carefully on his opponent's words, reminding us that Ulysses is not above perjuring himself to win the sought-after arms. "'Tis safer . . . to fight with lying words than with hands," Ajax observes, "But I am not prompt to speak"—

I am as much his master in the fierce conflict of the battle-line as he is mine in talk. As for my deeds, O Greeks, I do not think I need to rehearse them to you, for you have seen them. Let Ulysses tell of his, done without witness, done with the night alone to see them!⁵⁸

Ajax implies that since the Palladium was stolen under the cover of night, Ulysses may only be pretending to have accomplished the deed. Merited or not, his suspicion plants the seed of doubt in our minds as well, and

Ovid accomplishes with the aid of a wary rival what Virgil achieved with an unreliable prosecutor: he erodes our conviction that it was Ulysses who stole the Palladium.

If in the *Metamorphoses* Ovid only insinuates that Ulysses exaggerates his involvement in the theft, then in the *Fasti* he admits quite openly to not knowing who perpetrated the deed:

Whether it was the descendant of Adrastus, or the guileful Ulysses, or Aeneas, they say someone carried it off; the culprit is uncertain; the thing is now at Rome.⁵⁹

Ovid makes explicit in these lines what we have seen to be the widespread inconsistency regarding the theft of the Palladium. Ulysses is perhaps guilty of stealing the sacred statue, but he may very well not be, Ovid suggests.

In the Medieval Latin tradition Ulysses's culpability is still less certain. A perpetrator is named, yet it is not Ulysses but Antenor who steals the Palladium. Dictys reports that Antenor went to the temple of Minerva during the night and begged the priestess to give him the statue, which he then presents to Diomedes and Ulysses. In Guido's *Historia* Antenor again arranges and carries out the theft, explaining to the guard of the temple that "the crime will be ascribed to Ulysses only. For it will be said that Ulysses took the Palladium from the temple and we two will be completely absolved from all danger of guilt."⁶⁰ David Thompson assumes that Dante has Guido's account in mind when he writes this canto. "Where in the Inferno, does Virgil[i]o mention a 'theft'?" he asks. "Ulysses and Diomedes are paying the penalty for the Palladium. Period. A trivial detail, perhaps—unless we recall that someone else stole the Palladium."⁶¹ Thompson is quite right to look beyond Virgil and Ovid for an account of the theft, and we ought to dwell on the substance of Antenor's prediction, since, for the most part, Ulysses *will* be blamed for his crime. However, by assuming that Dante relies on only one source for the theft, in this case Guido's *Historia*, Thompson still reflects the critical tendency to gloss over the obvious inconsistencies in Dante's Ulysses so as to align him with his reading, damning the sinner to save the phenomenon. In contrast, I suggest that Dante does not tell us what role Ulysses played in the theft because he wishes to capitalize on the ambivalence already present in the literature, a nexus wherein his sources offer divergent explanations of the same crime.

In his discussion of Virgilian intertextuality Richard F. Thomas explains that "through allusion and through alteration or conflation of his models" a poet "sets himself in a tradition," and "subsumes and transforms that tradition" in the process.⁶² The Ulysses introduced by Virgil in the earlier part of *Inferno* 26 illustrates this point well. Through and through a literary paradox, a pastiche of medieval and classical accounts, Dante's Ulysses testifies to his own murky ancestral lineage. Yet instead of providing a key to this figure, Dante gives his reader only riddles, conflating and contradicting his sources at every turn.

This narrative misprision seems to be the only constant in Virgil's introduction. The reader is thus left to ponder how to reconcile the early portrait of the sinner with the later version of Ulysses, who rises from the ashes of Dante's discarded sources to narrate his nautical death. By way of an answer, I suggest that taken together these dual portraits of Ulysses mimic a mode of allusion characteristic of the writings on Troy, a stemma of intertextuality that is both reverential and subversive, in which an author first develops a literary foundation for his writing but then presents his own work as a corrective. Indeed, we have witnessed this kind of allusion in Dares and Dictys's revisionary portrayal of Aeneas as a traitor, an interpretation that simultaneously relies on yet superimposes the Homeric tradition it seeks to counteract. We have witnessed this further in Statius's *ab ovo* account of Achilles, in which the poet announces his desire to move beyond his sources by recounting the "whole tale of Troy," and "not to stop short at the dragging of Hector, but to lead the youth" from beginning to end. Finally, we have witnessed this in Guido's assurance that it was Antenor who stole the Palladium, despite the attestations of Virgil, the "highest of poets," to the contrary. We have witnessed, in other words, the malleability of textual truth, and the versatile capacity for allusion to simultaneously latch onto a prior genealogy while declaring its members antiquated. For only after developing his Ulysses out of a corpus of Trojan writings (which he then polishes to reveal its uneven grain), does Dante rewrite the very narratives on which his Ulysses is based in a monologue that is a tour de force of dis/ingenuity. A palimpsest through which we can recall the hero's complex literary lineage even as it is bifurcated, cast-off, and rewritten, with Dante's original account standing at the fore, the Ulysses of *Inferno* 26 bookends his own textual Odyssey.

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NOTES

I cannot adequately express my gratitude to Fiona Somerset, who patiently and repeatedly read over this paper as it developed, providing valuable insight and support along the way. I would also like to thank Franco Masciandaro, Elizaveta Strakhov, A.B. Kraebel, Richard Lansing, and the anonymous readers of *Dante Studies* for their comments and suggestions.

1. The Italian text of the *Commedia* is taken from Giorgio Petrocchi's edition (Milan: Mondadori, 1966–67; 2nd ed., Florence: Le Lettere, 1994), *Inf.* 11.60. Subsequent references to this edition will be cited in the text by canto and line number.

2. *Inf.* 27.131–36, 28.35, and 28.134–39.

3. Guido da Montafeltro claims at *Inf.* 27.116 that the black cherub took him “perché diede ‘l consiglio frodolente.” Because he suffers in the same bolgia as Ulysses, this statement was long read by scholars as an explanation of not only his own but also of Ulysses' and Diomedes's sin. However, since Anna Hatcher's seminal article, “Dante's Ulysses and Guido da Montafeltro,” *Dante Studies* 88 (1970): 109–17, in which Hatcher argues the inapplicability of the term “fraudulent counsel” when applied to Ulysses's sins, we have been forced to reevaluate the aptitude of this assumption. For key studies on this debate see especially Hatcher's article, as well as James Truscott, “Ulysses and Guido: *Inf.* XXVI–XXVII,” *Dante Studies* 91 (1973): 47–72; David Thompson, “A Note on Fraudulent Counsel,” *Dante Studies* 92 (1974): 149–52, and Mark Musa, “Filling the Gap with Consiglio Frodolente,” *Italian Culture* 3 (1981): 11–21.

4. Bruno Nardi, “La Tragedia d'Ulisse,” *Studi Danteschi* 20 (1937): 13–14, argues that “Nel folle volo d'Ulisse, Dante scorge una continuazione del peccato originale, anzi del peccato degli angeli ribelli.”

5. John Freccero, *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 139, claims that “Ulysses' itinerary is clearly set forth as an ancient analogue of Dante's adventure.” Teodolinda Barolini, *The Undivine Comedy: Detheologizing Dante* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 52, characterizes Ulysses as “the lightning rod Dante places in the poem to attract and defuse his own consciousness of the presumption involved in anointing oneself *scriba Dei*.” Cf. Rocco Montano, “Il ‘folle volo’ di Ulisse,” *Suggerimenti per una lettura di Dante* (Naples: Conte Editore, 1956), 141, who denies any affinity between the two figures, rejecting this “confusione fra Dante poeta e le sue creature dannate.”

6. Phillip W. Damon, “Dante's Ulysses and the Mythic Tradition,” *Medieval Secular Literature*, ed. William Mathews (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 42.

7. See above, note 3.

8. Mark Musa, “Filling the Gap with Consiglio Frodolente,” 19.

9. Or, as Ronald Herzman remarks, “the beginning of Aeneas' journey is recalled in what should have been the end of Ulysses'.” See “‘Io Non Enëa, Io Non Paolo Sono’: Ulysses, Guido da Montefeltro, and Franciscan Traditions in the *Commedia*,” *Dante Studies* 123 (2005): 33.

10. All quotations from the *Aeneid* and their English translations are cited from the Loeb edition: H. Rushton Fairclough, trans., *Virgil*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1918, revised 1999).

11. “Atque hic ingentem comitum adfluxisse novorum, / invenio admirans numerum, matresque virosque / collectam exsilio pubem” (*Aen.* 2.796–98).

12. “Dividimus muros et moenia pandimus urbis” (*Aen.* 2.234).

13. “Scandit fatalis machina muros feta armis” (*Aen.* 2.237–38).

14. “Tamen defectum magnorum auctorum, Virgilii, Ovidii, et Homeri, qui in exprimenda veritate Troyani casus nimium defecerunt . . . et specialiter ille summus poetarum Virgilius, quem nichil latuit.” All quotations from the *Historia* are cited from Nathaniel E. Griffin's edition (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1936), 276 (35) according to page number and book. Translations are from *The History of the Destruction of Troy*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), 265, and are cited according to page number.

15. In fact, Guido follows Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* rather closely.

16. "Publicorum sue patrie proditorum" (*Historia*, ed. Griffin, 233 [30]; trans. Meek, 224).
17. "Disposuerunt preterea et ipsi a Troia recedere" (*Historia*, ed. Griffin, 235 [30]; trans. Meek, 226).
18. Anonymous Florentine (1400[?]), *Inf.* 26.58–60, cited from the Dartmouth Dante Project (<http://dante.dartmouth.edu>).
19. "Quod illud quod autor hic scribit de morte Ulyxis non habet verum neque secundum historicam veritatem, neque secundum poeticam fictionem Homeri vel alterius poetae. . . . Nam, ut tradit Dites graecus et Dares phrygius in troiana historia, Ulyxes fuit interfectus a Telagone" (Benvenuto da Imola [1375–80], *Inf.* 26.136–42), cited from the Dartmouth Dante Project. The translation is my own.
20. As Giorgio Inglese reminds us, we cannot assume that the events narrated in the *Aeneid* encountered no dispute. To the contrary, "Dante aveva a che fare con una tradizione discorde, per larga parte sfavorevole alla veridicità del racconto virgiliano e, per quanto riguarda la caduta di Troia, dipendente piuttosto dalle fonti pseudostoriche—il filogreco Ditti e soprattutto il filotroiano Darete—, che associavano Enea ad Antenore nel tradimento della patria" ("Una pagina di Guido delle Colonne e l'Enea dantesco [con una postilla a *If* II 23: 'per lo loco santo']," *La Cultura* 3 [1997]: 404).
21. As James Farrow observes, "Aeneas and Rome: Pseudepigrapha and Politics," *The Classical Journal* 87 (1992): 40–41, the depiction of Aeneas as the founder of Rome was hardly mainstream. In fact, "during the second century BC, the old Roman 'poetic' tradition which made Romulus Aeneas' grandson . . . fell into obsolescence." It was Virgil who revised this: the *Aeneid* stood out as "a reversion" to an old order, and the "post-Vergilian Latin 'canon' was centered around the figure of *pius* Aeneas."
22. "Tegmina foeda" (1.142). All quotations from the *Achilleid* and their English translations are cited from the Loeb edition: J. H. Mozley, trans., *Statius* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1928). Subsequent references to this edition will be noted in the text according to book and line number.
23. "Magnae vastator debite Troiae" (*Achill.* 2.32). See also *Achill.* 1.474–81, 1.871, and 1.915.
24. "Olim et ferre minas avidaque audire solebat / imperia et nostris procul haud discedere ab antris: / nunc illum non Ossa capit, non Pelion ingens / Thessaliaeve nives" (*Achill.* 1.149–52).
25. "Effrenae tumidum velut igne iuventae / si quis equum primis submittere temptet habenis: / ille diu campis fluvisque et honore superbo / gavisus non colla iugo, non aspera praebebat / ora lupis Dominique fremit captivus inire / imperia atque alios miratur discere cursus" (*Achill.* 1.277–82).
26. "Ardescent animi primusque per ora / spumat amor" (*Achill.* 1.316–17).
27. "Nusquam mandata parentis, / nusquam occultus amor, totoque in pectore Troia est. / ut leo, materno cum raptus ab ubere mores / accepit pectique iubas hominemque vereri, / edidit nullasque rapi nisi iussus in iras, / si semel adverso radiavit lumie ferrum, / eiurata fides dimittitque inimicus, in illum / prima fames, timidoque pudet servisse magistro" (*Achill.* 1.856–63).
28. "Ficta parens" (*Achill.* 1.140).
29. "[Ne] incepti pereant mendacia furti" (*Achill.* 1.339–43).
30. "Quis deus attonite fraudes astumque parenti contulit?" (*Achill.* 1.283–84).
31. "Quis divum fraudibus obstet?" (*Achill.* 1.364).
32. "Alia plangebat parte resectos / Deidamia dolos" (*Achill.* 1.885–86).
33. Harald Anderson, *The Manuscripts of Statius: Volume III, Reception: The Vitae and Accessus* (Arlington, 2009).
34. "Vtilitas est ne fatis obuiare temptemus, cum Thetidem eis obuiantem nichil profecisse nouerimus" (quoted in Anderson, *The Manuscripts of Statius*, 20). The English translation is my own.
35. "Consequimur autem hanc vtilitatem ut non obstemus diuine dispositioni" (quoted in Anderson, *The Manuscripts of Statius*, 29).
36. "Quod fecit auctor hac intentione, ut retrahat nos ab hac intentione, scilicet ne uelimus res<is>tere predestinationi deorum, sicut Thetis uoluit facere" (quoted in Anderson, *The Manuscripts of Statius*, 91).

37. "Ergo et hic liber Statii merito subponitur ethice, id est morali parti. Agit enim de moribus multipliciter. Agit . . . de consilio et prudentia in Ulixē" (quoted in Anderson, *The Manuscripts of Statius*, 25).
38. "Acer id est facundus. ulixes in calliditate, vel acer id est bellicosus facundus" (Paul M. Clogon, ed., *The Medieval Achilleid of Statius* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968], 108).
39. "Sollers"; "dolos" (*Achill.* 1.784, 1.847).
40. "Nos ire per omnem— / Sic amor est—heroa velis Schiroque lantentem / Dulichia preferre tuba nec in Hectore tracto / Sistere, sed tota iuvenem deductere Troia" (*Achill.* 1.4–7).
41. "Fata vetant" (*Achill.* 1.81).
42. "[Ne] si fata negent" (*Achill.* 1.549).
43. "Tunc haerentem ithacum calydonius occupat heros: / 'nos vocat iste labor'" (*Achill.* 1.538–39).
44. Suzanne C. Hagedorn aptly describes this as the "ripple effect" of Thetis's fraud (*Abandoned Women: Rewriting the Classics in Dante, Boccaccio, & Chaucer* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004], 59).
45. Hagedorn, *Abandoned Women*, 65.
46. "Tene . . . magnae vastator debite Troiae, / quem Danae classes, quem divum oracula poscunt, / erectumque manet reserato in limine Bellum" (*Achill.* 2.32–34).
47. "Quid si nunc aliquis patriis rapturus ab oris / Deidamian eat viduaeque et sede revellat / attonitam et magni clamantem nomen Achillis?" (*Achill.* 2.81–83).
48. Hagedorn, *Abandoned Women*, 64.
49. *Achill.* 2.35.
50. Because it has little in common with the other two offences, this third explanation has baffled even those critics most intent on finding a unifying sin for Ulysses. Truscott, for example, admits that the theft of the Palladium "bears no exact parallel to the other two [crimes]" ("Ulysses and Guido," 62).
51. J.G. Frazer, ed. and trans., *Apolodorus: The Library*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 2:39n2 (3.12.3). Frazer includes a useful summary of the various accounts of the theft. See also R.G. Austin, ed. *Aeneidos: Liber Secundus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 83–85.
52. See Frazer, ed. and trans., *The Library*, 2:39n2.
53. Mark Mirsky, *Dante, Eros, and Kabbalah* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 208n13. See also W.B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1954), 132, who similarly observes that because Aeneas communicates "only what Sinon told the Trojans and not what he experienced personally," our knowledge of Ulysses's role in the theft is, at best, circumstantial.
54. "Talibus insidiis periurique arte Sinonis / credita res, captique dolos lacrimisque coactis, quos neque Tydides nec Larisaeus Achilles" (*Aen.* 2.195–97).
55. R.D. Williams, ed., *The Aeneid of Virgil 1–6* (Macmillan: St. Martin's Press, 1972), 221.
56. R.G. Austin, ed., *Aeneidos Liber Secundus*, 93n194.
57. "Quam rapui Phrygiae signum penetrale Minervae / hostibus e mediis . . . / . . . cur audet Ulixes / ire per excubias et se committere nocti / perque feros enses non tantum moenia Troum, / verum etiam summas arces intrare suaque / eripere aede deam raptamque adferre per hostes? / . . . / illa nocte mihi Troiae victoria parta est: / Pergama tunc vici, cum vinci posse coegi." Text and translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are cited according to book and line number from the Loeb edition: Frank Justus Miller, trans., *Ovid*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1916), 13.337–38, 13.41–45, 13.48–49.
58. "Quantumque ego Marte feroci / inque acie valeo, tantem valet iste loquendo. / nec memoranda tamen vobis mea facta, Pelasgi, / esse reor: vidistis enim; sua narret Ulixes, / quae sine teste gerit, quorum nox conscia sola est!" (*Met.* 13.11–15).
59. "Seu gener Adrasti, seu furtis aptus Ulixes, seu fuit Aeneas, eripuisse ferunt; / auctor in incerto, res est Romana." Text and translation of Ovid's *Fasti* are cited according to book and line number from the Loeb edition: J.G. Frazer, trans., *Ovid*, vol. 5 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931), 6.433–35.

60. "Soli Vlixi poterit culpa eius ascribe. Dicetur enim Ulixem a templo Palladium subtraxisse, et nos duo erimus ab omni nocencie crimine penitus excusati" (*Historia*, ed. Griffin, 229 [30]; trans. Meek, 220).

61. Thompson, "Fraudulent Counsel," 150.

62. Richard F. Thomas, "Catullus and the Polemics of Poetic Reference (Poem 64.1–18)," *American Journal of Philology* 103 (1982): 144–64, at 44–45.

Dante and the Donation of Constantine

DABNEY G. PARK

The story is an ancient one, embedded in the murky past.¹ Constantine the Great, the emperor of all that Rome possessed from Hadrian's Wall to Thebes and from Lisbon to Trebizond, had contracted the dread disease of elephantaic leprosy. His pagan priests advised him to bathe in the warm blood of 3,000 freshly killed infants. Faced with their wailing and ululating mothers, Constantine broke into tears and relented—an act that was taken as confirmation that the Roman Empire was founded not on violence but on piety. In a dream, he was visited by Saints Peter and Paul, who told the emperor that Sylvester, the bishop of Rome and the leader of Christianity in the West, could cure his leprosy. Constantine begged Sylvester to leave his cave on Mount Soracte and to come to Rome to help him. Sylvester baptized Constantine at the emperor's palace in the Lateran. When Constantine was immersed, he saw a marvelous light, the heavens opened, Christ appeared, and his leprosy was miraculously cured. In gratitude, Constantine made Sylvester the head of all the bishops in the Christian Church throughout the world: he bestowed on him the Lateran palace and many imperial insignia, and he gave him the city of Rome and the western half of the empire.

The trouble is, there is no evidence that all of this really happened. In fact, Constantine was baptized not by Sylvester but by the Arian Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia just before his death in 337.² A conflicting version of the story of Constantine, reported by Eusebius of Caesarea, altogether ignores Sylvester. It relates that in a noonday dream before the Battle of Milvian Bridge, Constantine saw a fiery cross in the sky and heard angels singing “in hoc signo vinces” (by this sign you will conquer).³ Otto of Freising, writing in the mid-thirteenth century, says that “what we read

in the Life of St. Sylvester about his [i.e., Constantine's] leprosy is seen to be apocryphal."⁴ In 1440 Lorenzo Valla was able to prove that the entire story of Constantine's conversion and his award of the empire to Sylvester was a forgery.⁵ According to Johannes Fried, the "Donation of Constantine" became "the most infamous forgery in the history of the world."⁶

The Document

The first fabrication was the *Vita sancti Sylvestri papae* (*Life of Pope St. Sylvester*), which dates from the fifth century.⁷ The *Vita* starts with the story of Constantine's leprosy, his baptism, and his cure,⁸ and then it relates how the emperor promulgated an edict on each of the seven days following his baptism.⁹ On the fourth day Constantine's edict granted a "privilege to the Roman Church and its pontiffs: that all the priests in the Roman world should have him as the head."¹⁰ This edict made Sylvester the head of the clergy of the Roman Church; it did not award him any temporal domains or titles. Sylvester is referred to by the titles *episcopus* and *pontifex*. *Pontifex* was at the time a pagan title for religious advisors to the emperor; it had not previously been applied to, nor was it reserved for the pope.¹¹ On the eighth day the emperor went to church of St. Peter and confessed his sins aloud, after which he promised to build a temple in the Lateran palace. The document says nothing about a gift or donation of churches, land, or property, much less imperial authority.

The second fabrication of the story of Sylvester and Constantine was imbedded in a document known as the *Constitutum Constantini* (*Constitution of Constantine*). This document, forged in the papal chancery in the mid-eighth century, went much farther. Here Constantine was far more generous: he gave Pope Sylvester and his successors the Lateran palace, the city of Rome, certain imperial insignia, and all of the provinces or western regions, places, and cities of Italy.¹² The story presented in the *Constitutum Constantini* is not about events in the early fourth century, but instead about a major shift in the territorial and political position of the popes in the eighth century, over four hundred years after Constantine. By this time the district of Rome was a subdivision of the Byzantine Empire, governed under the exarchate of Ravenna. The popes owned the Lateran Palace, St. Peter's across the Tiber, St. Paul's outside the walls, other church buildings both in Rome and beyond, and some large landed

estates in Rome and the surrounding area, in southern Italy and in Sicily. These lands had been left to popes as prominent families had become extinct over the course of four dark centuries.¹³ Laymen looking for absolution of their sins and admission to heaven continued to leave vast properties to the church through the following centuries.¹⁴ Charters granting lay properties to the church were occasionally forged, and during the crusades the church inherited and purchased many landed estates when crusading nobles either died in the Holy Land or sold their properties to churches to fund the trips.¹⁵ Although its landed possessions were scattered, the Roman church became the largest landowner in Italy.

By the early eighth century the Byzantine Empire was stretched to its limits, unable to protect or effectively control the city of Rome. In 726 the Byzantine emperor issued an edict unilaterally commanding the destruction of all saints' images in the Christian world. The Western church simply could not accept this edict, and the emperor in Constantinople was unable to enforce it. A 731 synod in Rome responded by declaring that anyone who attacked the images of the saints would be excommunicated. The iconoclastic controversy effectively "broke the cord that bound [Rome] to the East."¹⁶ The popes began to fill the power vacuum in the West and to hew an independent course for the Roman church.¹⁷

The Lombard threat further divided Rome from Constantinople. By the early eighth century these barbarians had conquered almost all the Italian peninsula and severed the lifeline between the cities of Ravenna and Rome. In 751 the Lombards conquered Ravenna and drove out the Byzantine exarch. The new pope, Stephen II (752–757), saw opportunity in adversity. He sought to unite under his rule the Duchy of Rome, the city of Venice, and the duchies of Ravenna, Spoleto, Benevento, and the Pentapolis (the five cities on the Adriatic to the south of Ravenna). But he needed help. In France, Charles Martel and his son Pepin had recently replaced the Merovingian monarchy. Stephen decided to make a deal with the Carolingian Franks. For the first time a pope crossed the Alps: Stephen II met with Pepin at St. Denis, anointed him a Christian king in 754, and named him "Patrician of the Romans," a title formerly held by the Byzantine exarch of Ravenna. In gratitude King Pepin attacked the Lombards and conquered the Duchy of Ravenna, the Duchy of the Pentapolis, and other cities between Ravenna and Rome. He then handed

the great iron keys of twenty-two cities to Stephen II. They were deposited in St. Peter's tomb, where they may be found today.

It was in this context that a clever papal bureaucrat used the legendary hagiography of Sylvester to forge the *Constitutum Constantini*, which in the eleventh and twelfth centuries became known as the Donation of Constantine.¹⁸ The forged *Constitutum* cemented this position and gave the popes a legitimate claim to dominion over this territory. The pope had become de jure as well as de facto a feudal lord, controlling vast lands and cities in central and southern Italy and enjoying their income.¹⁹

The story of Constantine's alleged gift eventually found its way into the *Decretum*, the great compilation of canon law accomplished by Gratian in the twelfth century, where it was included as a *palea*, or supplementary material.²⁰ It was used occasionally by the popes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to justify their temporal and political authority over Rome and the areas that became known as the Patrimony of St. Peter and later as the Papal States. The Donation was sometimes used by hierocratic popes, canon lawyers, and theologians to claim papal superiority over the empire.²¹ In a parallel development on the imperial side, the validity of the Donation was rejected by civil lawyers and imperial publicists.

There is no doubt that Constantine transformed the Western world. Christianity became the dominant religion, the bishops of Rome became the popes of the Roman Church, and over time they became securely established as the undisputed heads of Latin Christendom. Dante would later say that the eagle of the empire had collided with the chariot of the church and left it covered with the feathers of property, temporal power, and earthly cares (*Purg.* 33.38). However, it was in the eighth century, not in the fourth, that the papacy acquired significant temporal power. In Dante's time, no one rejected the authenticity of the gift; that is, both sides accepted as fact that Constantine had made the gift to Sylvester. Dante and the imperial side rejected the validity of the Donation on grounds that we shall shortly explore.

The controversy over the Donation continued even after Lorenzo Valla proved that the *Constitutum Constantini* was a forgery.²² Prue Shaw says that for Dante, Constantine's gift of property and temporal power "was the key event in human history which explained the sorry state of the modern world."²³ Dante marked with the Donation of Constantine the moment when the Church started down the path of corruption by acquiring property, wealth, temporal power, and political authority.

The *Commedia*

Readers of Dante are familiar with the references to Constantine and the Donation in the *Commedia*. The nineteenth canto of *Inferno* opens with an apostrophe bewailing the sin of simony, the sale of church offices:

O Simon mago, o miseri seguaci
che le cose di Dio, che di bontate
deon essere spose, e voi rapaci
per oro e per argento avolterate.
Inf. 19.1–4²⁴

Simon Magus was the Samaritan magician who tried to buy the power of conferring the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. Peter rebuked him, saying “Keep thy money to thyself, to perish with thee, because thou has thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money” (Acts 8:18–20).²⁵ The “followers” of Simon Magus were prelates guilty of the sin of simony, traffic in the offices of the church or, in more general terms, misuse of ecclesiastical authority.²⁶ Dante’s passage is pertinent to the Donation because it sets up his subsequent direct reference to Constantine. The “things of God” include ordination to holy orders and appointments to church offices, including promotion to canon, bishop, archbishop, abbot, and cardinal. Such appointments were almost always tied to specific properties and to the income from those properties. These “things of God” should be the brides of goodness or of good men, but they cannot honor their good spouses because they are preyed upon by prelates guilty of simony, who commit adultery with them. In this act the corrupt prelates betray a promise as sacred as a marital vow and as holy as Christ’s promise to be faithful to the church.

Simony and nepotism, both violations of the church’s proper role as stewards of temporal goods for the poor of Christ, dominate Canto 19 of *Inferno*. Dante the pilgrim finds Pope Nicholas III buried upside down in a tube in the rock, with flames coming off his feet. The rock is an infernal parody of the church. Because they sought only earthly things, the simoniac popes are set upside-down in the rock, a parody of the crucifixion.²⁷ Incensed, Dante addresses Nicholas III, saying:²⁸

Di voi pastor s’accorse il Vangelista,
quando colei che siede sopra l’aue
puttaneggiar coi regi a lui fu vista.
Inf. 19.106–8

Note that Dante does not say that Nicholas III is *like* the Great Whore of Babylon in chapter 7 of the Apocalypse of St. John—he says that Nicholas is “she that sitteth upon the waters.”²⁹ Dante continues:

Ahi, Costantin, di quanto mal fu matre,
non la tua conversion, ma quella dote
che da te prese il primo ricco patre!
Inf. 19.115–17 (emphasis added)

In *Inferno* 19 we experience Dante’s extreme anger with the sin of simony, the pomp and luxury of the Holy See, and the misuse of church property. Dante scorchingly upbraids Nicholas III for promoting members of his own family, and in the process he names two other popes who, in Dante’s eyes, were as guilty of abusing the power and wealth of the church: Boniface VIII and Clement V. The Donation of Constantine, he charges, was the mother of much evil. Constantine’s conversion prompted an act of generosity, but this was not the cause of such evil; the evil followed because Sylvester “took” (*prese*) the dowry from him and used it to become “the first rich Father.” It is most interesting that the early commentators, most of the later ones, and many of the English translators have missed the significance of Dante’s selection of the word *prese*, which clearly puts the burden of blame on Sylvester for the evil that resulted from Constantine’s act.³⁰

In calling Sylvester “the first rich Father” and alluding to the Great Whore of Babylon, Dante foreshadows his treatment of the Donation of Constantine in *Purgatorio* as the critical, disastrous event in the history of the early church. Note, however, that Dante does not accuse Constantine for this disaster, and he even comes close to excusing the emperor by excepting his conversion to Christianity from the evil that followed. Bitterly as his words in *Inferno* 19 lament the Donation, Dante does not challenge the fact that Sylvester took Rome and parts of the West from Constantine. However, it was the pope, not Constantine, who was at fault for the devastating result.

Dante’s anger about the Donation of Constantine in *Inferno* 19 turns to dismay in *Purgatorio* 32. Here the pilgrim witnesses the pageant of the Church Militant, a reenactment of the history of the church from the time of Christ to his own day. Beatrice commands Dante to keep his eyes on the chariot of the church and to write down what he sees when he gets back to earth for the sake of the world that lives in an awful state:

Però, in pro del mondo che mal vive,
al carro tieni or li occhi, e quel che vidi,
ritornato di là, fa che tu scrive.

Purg. 32.103–5³¹

With this command, Beatrice raises Dante's version of the history of the church to the highest level of importance.

First, an eagle attacks the chariot of the church with full force and shakes it violently (*Purg.* 32.109–17). Since this eagle is described as the “uccel di Giove” (112), the event is commonly interpreted as the persecution of the early church by the Roman Empire. Then a fox pounces on the chariot and is repelled by Beatrice (*Purg.* 32.118–23). Most commentators interpret the fox as the heresies that threatened the church in the first few centuries. Third, the eagle descends upon the chariot again, this time leaving it laden with feathers (*Purg.* 32.124–29). At this point, a voice from heaven cries out, “O navicella mia, com’ mal se’ carca!” (*Purg.* 32.129).³²

All commentators agree with Pietro di Dante in identifying the feathers with temporal goods and the episode with the Donation of Constantine.³³ The eagle’s feathers multiply and the chariot of the church becomes covered with the plumage of wealth and earthly power (*Purg.* 32.136–41). It is then transformed into the beast of the Apocalypse, who carries the Great Whore “like a fortress on a towering mountain” (*Purg.* 32.142–50).³⁴ In the next canto, Dante calls the Great Whore a thief (*fuia*, *Par.* 33.44),³⁵ further reinforcing the nature of Sylvester’s act in taking the Donation from Constantine. The emperor’s intention, however, may have been pure; he awarded the gift “forse con intenzion sana e benigna” (*Purg.* 32.138).³⁶ If the Donation were an occasion for sin, the fault lay not with Constantine but with the church, which became mired in avarice, wealth, and corruption.

Expressed as extreme anger in *Inferno* and as profound dismay in *Purgatorio*, Dante’s perspective on the Donation of Constantine in these two cantos is completely consistent. This is also true of the third important reference to the disastrous gift in *Paradiso* (20.55–60). Dante places Constantine in the heaven of Jupiter with those who loved and exercised justice. Here the eagle of the empire names the souls that form its eye. At line 55 the eagle turns to Constantine:

L’altro che segue, con le leggi e meco,
sotto buona intenzion che fê mal frutto,
per cedere al pastor si fece greco:

ora conosce come il mal dedutto
dal suo bene operar non li è nocivo,
avvenga che sia 'l mondo indi distrutto.

Par. 20.55–60

Constantine “turned Greek” by ceding the West to Sylvester and by moving his capital from Rome to Byzantium, renamed as Constantinople. Here we learn that Dante accepted Constantine’s intentions as worthy but stated that they bore an awful fruit. The Donation did not prevent the emperor from being elected to Heaven, but because the popes mistreated Constantine’s award, the world was destroyed. Dante says here that the Donation of Constantine brought not only the church but the entire world to ruin.

Constantine enjoys exceptional status for Dante not only because he was emperor of the entire Roman Empire and the first emperor to become a Christian, but also because he believed that Virgil foretold the birth of Christ in the *Fourth Eclogue*.³⁷ Dante refers to Constantine in two other places in the *Commedia*. In the heaven of Mercury, he has Justinian say that “Costantin l’aquila volese / contr’ al corso del ciel” (Par. 6.1–2), referring to Constantine’s decision to move his capital to Byzantium. By implication, this act left Rome and the West in the hands of Sylvester. In turning eastward, Constantine unnaturally reversed the westward journey of Aeneas.³⁸

The other reference to Constantine is a bit more complex. Among the evil counselors in Hell, we find Guido da Montefeltro, the famous warrior turned Franciscan. In telling his story to Dante and Virgil, Guido uses a simile to describe his summons by Boniface VIII:

Ma come Costantin chiese Silvestro
d’entro Siratti a guerir de la lebbre,
così mi chiese questi per maestro
a guerir de la sua superba febbre.

Inf. 27.94–97

Here the roles are reversed: it is the pope who is sick, and he calls a former layman to come and help him. While this episode underlines Dante’s view of Boniface’s deceitfulness, it does not shed light on the Donation of Constantine.³⁹

Dante’s view of the Donation of Constantine is closely tied to his concept of the church’s proper role as stewards for the poor in *Paradiso*, where

he has Bonaventure of Bagnoregio⁴⁰ say that St. Dominic appealed to the Holy See for the “privilege of fighting / against the errors of the world”:

non dispensare o due o tre per sei,
non la fortuna di prima vacante,
non *decimas, quae sunt pauperum Dei*.
Par. 12.91–93

Unlike St. Dominic, other pastors sought favors from the popes, including lucrative benefices that enabled them to give away only small portions of their income (“two or three instead of six”), to look for opportunities to fill the next vacancy, and to get their hands on the tithes that really belong to Christ’s poor instead of to the church. The notion that the tenths, or tithes, were for the poor was a common idea throughout the Middle Ages.⁴¹

Later in *Paradiso* Dante returns to the theme of the church as a guardian of property for the needs of its people instead of for nepotism, which is closely tied to simony. Criticizing the abuses of his own order, St. Benedict says:

ché quantunque la Chiesa guarda, tutto
è de la gente che per Dio dimanda;
non di parenti né d’altro più brutto.
Par. 22.82–84

The church guards rather than owns temporal wealth, and it does so in behalf of those who need it; temporal wealth does not exist to be distributed to relatives. The “poor of Christ” are “those who ask for it [i.e., what the church guards] in God’s name.” Others saw two purposes for the church’s temporal goods: they were for building up the church and for the poor. Dante never admitted that the church’s resources were for anything other than the poor of Christ.⁴²

The *Convivio*, the *Monarchia*, and the Letters

Dante does not mention the Donation of Constantine in the *Convivio*, but he prepares the way for his treatment of the subject in the *Monarchia* with his discussion of scope of the emperor’s authority. In Book 4 he says that it is necessary for the “umana generazione” (human race) for there to be a

monarchy,—that is, a single principality, having one prince who, *possessing all things and being unable to desire anything else*, would keep the kings content within the boundaries of their kingdoms and preserve among them the peace. (*Conv.* 4.4.4; emphasis added).⁴³

Since the monarch possesses everything, the implication of this passage is that the rights to all property flow from the emperor. Although Dante clearly sees the authority of the emperor founded on his ultimate possession of everything in the world, it is interesting that Dante declines here and elsewhere to use the label *dominus mundi* (lord of the world) for the emperor, which was embedded in Roman law.

While Dante expresses anger, dismay, and regret regarding the Donation of Constantine in the *Commedia*, he uses the sharp scalpel of reason to analyze it in the *Monarchia*—without, however, completely abandoning the intensity of his emotion. The *Monarchia*, after all, was written as a piece of rhetoric in an effort to persuade its readers of its fundamental point: that the world should be ruled by a single monarchy. Although most scholars now accept Corrado Ricci's and Giorgio Petrocchi's dating of the first few cantos of *Paradiso* to 1316 and the *Monarchia* to 1317 or 1318, it is possible, as we shall see, that the *Monarchia* was written as early as 1312–14.⁴⁴ In either case, Dante stopped writing the *Commedia* to turn his attention to this other, very different rhetorical project.⁴⁵ Dante was probably living in Verona at the time, hosted by Cangrande della Scala, the Lord of Verona, who had been appointed imperial vicar of Verona and Vicenza for life by the emperor Henry VII.

In the *Monarchia*, Dante discusses the proper relationship between the papacy and the empire in scholastic, canonistic, legal, and philosophical terms. Toward the end of the first book he claims that the worldwide peace established by the perfect monarchy of Augustus Caesar was destroyed when “that seamless garment [*tunica inconsutilis*,⁴⁶ i.e., the empire] was first rent by the talon of cupidity [*cupiditatis ungue*]” (*Mon.* 1.16.3). As a result the state of the world became so woeful that Dante wishes “that we might not [have to] witness it” (*Mon.* 1.16.3).⁴⁷ The seamless garment of the empire was whole until it was cut into pieces by the Donation of Constantine, to which this passage clearly refers.⁴⁸ The talon of cupidity must refer to Sylvester; the seamless garment was torn by him in taking the Donation, not by Constantine, who bears no blame for the awful results.

In the second book of the *Monarchia*, Dante extends the blame beyond Sylvester to corrupt pastors and prelates in the church, “those who style themselves ardent defenders of the Christian faith.” These pastors “have no pity for Christ’s poor”: they steal the patrimony (*patrimonium*) of the poor and defraud the churches of their revenues. These pastors use the church’s resources to increase the wealth of their own relatives. Furthermore, they offer no thanks for receiving these resources from the empire:

But the impoverishment of the church does not happen without God’s judgment, since her resources are not used to help the poor (whose patrimony the church’s wealth is), and since no gratitude is shown for receiving them from the empire which offers them. (*Mon.* 2.10.2)⁴⁹

Immediately following this sentence, Dante makes the astounding statement that the church’s resources should be returned to the empire:

Let them [i.e., the church’s resources] return [*redeant*] where they came from. They came well, they return badly, since they were given in good faith and badly held [*male possessa*]. (*Mon.* 2.10.3)⁵⁰

Dante here makes two charges: that the church has either acquired or used the resources of the church badly; and that the church has failed to show gratitude for the Donation. It should be noted that Dante’s use of the word *possessa* in this passage is one of three places in any of his works where he uses a form of the word *possessio* with regard to church property, and here of course it is coupled to the word *male*. “Male possessa” could mean that the church’s resources were being abused, or it could mean that the process of giving or receiving possession of those resources could be *mala* (that is, illegitimately given or received), or it could mean both things. The close link in this passage between *bene data* and *mala possessa* clearly emphasizes the third interpretation, that the church’s resources were improperly transferred and poorly used. As we shall see below, *possessio* in Roman law was used to denote physical control of a thing, including the right to use it, but not to refer to the ultimate right of ownership, or *dominium*. Dante reinforces this point in the third book of the *Monarchia* when he says that the church could not accept the Donation of Constantine by way of possession (*Mon.* 3.10.15); it could, however, accept the Donation as a patrimony awarded as a protectorate or guardianship (*patrocinium*), but *non tanquam possessor* (*Mon.* 3.10.17). Thus Dante denies both *dominium* and *possessio* to the church.

In preparation for his thorough analysis of the Donation of Constantine in the third book of the *Monarchia*, Dante places a poignant apostrophe at the very end of the second book. The region of Italy had been torn asunder by the consequences of the Donation. He addresses the people of Italy with deep irony: "O happy people, O you glorious Ausonia! If only that man who made your empire weak [*infirmator*] had never been born, or [if] only his pious intention [*pia intentio*] had not seduced him!" (*Mon.* 2.11.8).⁵¹ Constantine is the *infirmator*, his *pia intentio* is the Donation. Antonino Pagliaro points out that Dante here clearly sees the Donation as a great mistake, in which Constantine fell under the thrust of his good intention.⁵² The implication is that the world would not have fallen into great evil had Constantine not made the award. In this passage Dante comes close to attributing blame to Constantine. However, while Constantine is the agent of this action, Dante still sees his intention as pious. Sylvester is not named here, but he must be at fault because Dante exculpates Constantine once again. The stage is now set for the third book of the *Monarchia*, where we learn much more about the Donation of Constantine.

The drama of the *Monarchia* reaches its apex Book 3, Chapter 10, where Dante offers his most direct and most detailed discussion of the Donation of Constantine. Here he shows that he was well aware that the canon lawyers known as the Decretalists used the Donation to claim that imperial authority was dependent on papal authority. They declared that Constantine gave the imperial seat (Rome) to Sylvester and to the church along with many other dignities and privileges. Dante does not directly refer to the text of the Donation; instead, he says that "some people maintain" that Constantine had made such a gift. Of course Dante rejects the claims of the Decretalists. This is the only place in Dante's works where he uses any version of the word *dona* or *donare* in relation to the Donation of Constantine, and here he puts the word *donavit* in the mouths of the Decretalists. In fact Dante seems assiduously to avoid calling the Donation of Constantine a gift.⁵³

For his part, Dante proposed a different concept of the act of Constantine's generosity. Disputing what these people say, he turns his attention from arguments based on theology to arguments based on human reason (*Mon.* 3.10.3). Following medieval logic, he offers seven syllogisms to prove that the Donation of Constantine, as conceived by those who use it to claim that imperial authority is dependent on papal authority, is

invalid. (For brevity, I offer here only the conclusions of these syllogisms; for the full analysis, see the appendix to this study.)

The first syllogism is the false proposition against which Dante argues in this chapter. The false conclusion of this overall syllogism is this:⁵⁴

1. No one can hold [temporal authority] legitimately unless granted it by the church (*Mon.* 3.10.3).

To reject this conclusion Dante denies the minor premise that “Roman authority to rule belongs to the church,”⁵⁵ which, he says, his opponents base on the authority given by Constantine to the church via the Donation. “I say that their ‘proof’ proves nothing,” Dante says, “because Constantine was not in a position to give away [*alienare*] the privileges of the empire [*imperii dignitatem*], nor was the church in a position to accept them” (*Mon.* 3.10.4).⁵⁶

Arguing against the interpretation of “some people” and presenting his own view of the Donation, Dante then offers six syllogisms drawn from reason to demonstrate that it would be impossible for Constantine to have made any such donation. The next five syllogisms end with the following positive conclusions:

2. The emperor cannot split up the empire (*Mon.* 3.10.6).⁵⁷
3. The empire cannot destroy itself (*Mon.* 3.10.9).
4. The empire precedes the emperor (*Mon.* 3.10.10).
5. The emperor, as emperor, cannot change the empire (*Mon.* 3.10.11).
6. The emperor can cut off some part of the empire [false] (*Mon.* 3.10.12).

All but one of these five syllogisms deal, in one way or another, with the fundamental point that the empire is an inalienable and indivisible unity, which neither Constantine nor any other emperor could possibly break apart.⁵⁸ Gustavo Vinay in his edition of the *Monarchia* claims that these conclusions of Dante’s all come from Roman law,⁵⁹ and Bruno Nardi asserts that they are drawn from an imperial legal tradition dating back to Otto III.⁶⁰ Both Vinay and Nardi note that the title “Augustus” comes from the word “augment,” suggesting that the emperor must increase and not diminish the empire; and both refer to the principle that

the emperor has no equal (*par in parem non habet imperium*), meaning that the successors of an emperor cannot countermand a predecessor's edicts. Vinay quotes from Accursius's *Glossa ad Authenticum* of Roman law, which includes the additional point that there can be only one office of the empire. On closer examination, however, it is clear that Dante did not in these passages use the argument stemming from the title of Augustus, or the concept of the emperor having no equal,⁶¹ or the principle that there cannot be two offices of the empire. He did use a fundamental principle from Roman law that relates generally to four of the five syllogisms, namely, the idea that the emperor cannot destroy or give away any part of the empire "because in that way the entire empire could perish [*quia sic possit totum imperium perire*]." ⁶²

Now we reach the sixth and final syllogism. This conclusion entirely changes the course of the argument to involve the relationship between the empire and the papacy. Dante here makes an astonishing statement.

7. The church could not accept [the Donation] as a possession, nor could Constantine give it as an irrevocable gift (*Mon.* 3.10.13–15).⁶³

Dante repeats the assertion that Constantine could not give the empire away, and he vigorously asserts the principle that the church could not receive such a donation. In his comments on this syllogism, he refers to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* to distinguish between the giver (the agent) and the receiver (the patient) in order to maintain that "for a donation [*collationem*]⁶⁴ to be legitimate requires a suitable disposition [*dispositio*] not just in the giver, but in the recipient as well" (*Mon.* 3.10.13). In other words, for a gift to be valid, the person receiving it must be able to receive it legitimately. It is true that in the fourth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle says that "a generous act does not depend on the amount given, but on the characteristics of the giver," but he says nothing about the proper disposition of the recipient.⁶⁵ Thomas Aquinas, in his commentary on the *Ethics*, stretches Aristotle's meaning to include the person receiving the gift.⁶⁶

Following Aquinas, Dante then focusses on the disposition of the church to receive a gift like the Donation of Constantine:

But the church was in no sense properly disposed [*indisposita erat*] to receive temporal things on account of the express prohibition recorded by Matthew [10:9]: "Possess not [*Nolite possidere*] gold or silver, nor money in your girdles,

nor purse for your journey, etc.” And although we find a slight modification of this precept in certain respects in Luke [22:35–36], still I have been unable to discover that permission to possess [*ad possessionem*] gold and silver was granted to the church subsequent to that prohibition. (*Mon.* 3.10.14)⁶⁷

Dante’s reason for declaring that the church is not capable of receiving temporal things is that the gospel of Matthew expressly prohibits possession when Christ tells the apostles to “Possess not gold, silver, or money” (Matt. 10:9–10).⁶⁸ He then allows that this precept was somewhat relaxed in Luke 22:35–36,⁶⁹ but insists that he has not been able to find that the church was ever granted permission to possess gold and silver after the prohibition in Matthew.

And thus, if the church could not receive it, then even supposing that Constantine had been in a position to perform that action, nonetheless the action itself was not possible because of the unsuitability [*indispositionem*] of the “patient” or recipient. It is therefore clear that the church could not accept it as a possession [*per modum possessionis*], nor could Constantine give it as an irrevocable gift [*per modum alienationis*]. (*Mon.* 3.10.15)⁷⁰

Dante then clearly and concisely states his position on the Donation of Constantine and on the nature of church property:

The emperor could however delegate [*deputare*] a patrimony and other resources [*patrimonium et alia*] to the church [*ecclesie*] as a protectorate [*in patrocinium*], provided it was without prejudice to the superior imperial authority [*inmoto semper superiori dominio*], whose unity admits no division. And God’s vicar could receive it, not as owner [*non tanquam possessor*] but as administrator [*dispensator*] of its fruits for the church for Christ’s poor, as the apostles are known to have done [Acts 4:34–37]. (*Mon.* 3.10.16–17)⁷¹

The emperor was capable of making the pope a deputy and awarding the church a patrimony in patronage or as a protectorate (*in patrocinium*) but not as an outright gift, in which property would be alienated and ownership would be transferred. It would be difficult for Dante to state more clearly his view that the church had absolutely no right to the ownership, possession, or dominion of property.⁷² It is equally clear that the superior dominion of the property of the church belonged, and still belongs, to the emperor alone. Dante had previously summarized this point before detailing the syllogisms: “Constantine was not in a position to give away the privileges of empire, nor was the church in a position to accept them”

(*Mon.* 3.10.5). The Donation of Constantine, according to Dante, was not a gift but a revokable patronage or protectorship (*patrocinium*).

Dante repeats the idea that the emperor has ultimate *dominium* over the whole world in a public letter that he wrote in September or October of 1310, addressed to “To all and singular the Princes of Italy, and the Senators of the Sacred City [Rome], as also the Dukes, Marquises, Counts, and Peoples [of Italy]” (*Ep.* 5, Address).⁷³ After stating that the power of Peter and Caesar bifurcate from God as from one point (*Ep.* 5.5), he underlines the emperor’s ultimate dominion of the whole world in a different and more animated way by urging all the peoples of Italy, of whatever station,

to stand in reverent awe before his [i.e., Henry VII’s] presence, ye who drink of his streams, and sail upon his seas; ye who tread the sands of the shores and the summits of the mountains that are his; ye who enjoy all public rights and possess private property [*res privatae . . . possidetis*] by the bond of his law, and no otherwise. Be ye not like the ignorant, deceiving your own selves, after the manner of them that dream, and say in their hearts, “We have no Lord” [*Dominum non habemus*]. For all within the compass of the heavens is his garden and his lake; for “the sea is God’s, and He made it, and His hands prepared the dry land” [Psalms 95:5]. Wherefore it is made manifest by the wonders that have been wrought that God predestined the Roman Prince, and the church confesses that He afterward confirmed him by the word of the Word. (*Ep.* 5.7)⁷⁴

Shortly afterward Dante refers to Christ’s admonition to “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God, the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21), “as if He were dividing two kingdoms” (*Ep.* 5.9).⁷⁵

While the church could not actually own property, Dante thought that it could and should act as a steward or caretaker for the resources awarded to the church by Constantine and other laymen over the years—a theme already expressed in the *Commedia*. Dante returns to the theme of stewardship in Chapter 13: “Indeed, if Constantine had not had authority,” Dante tells us, “he could not legitimately have handed over to the church as a protectorate [*in patrocinium Ecclesie*] those things of the empire which he did hand over [*illa que de Imperio deputavit*]” (*Mon.* 3.13.7).⁷⁶ Had this occurred, the church would have used the bestowal of this benefice (*collatione*) unjustly. But “God wishes offerings to be spotless [*inmaculatas*],” like those of the Levites, so “it is foolish [*stultum*] to think that God would wish that something should be received which he has forbidden should be offered” (*Mon.* 3.13.8). The proposition is false, Dante says, because it

would be “terribly improper” (*valde inconveniens*) for the church to abuse its patrimony this way (*Mon.* 3.12.9).

The Levites were a model for Dante of how the clergy should function. As the tribe in charge of sacred things, they were to avoid being unclean in any way,⁷⁷ and they were prohibited from inheriting in Israel; therefore they did not own property.⁷⁸ Without mentioning the Donation of Constantine, Marco Lombardo bewails the Roman church’s involvement in temporal affairs and charges Dante to tell the world that the church has fallen in the mud:

“Dì oggimai che la Chiesa di Roma,
per confondere in sé due reggimenti,
cade nel fango, e sé brutta e la soma.”
Purg. 16.127–29

Dante the pilgrim responds by saying that he now understands why the Levites could not inherit property:

“O Marco mio,” diss’ io, “bene argomenti;
e or discerno perché dal retaggio
li figli di Levi furono essenti.”
Purg. 16.130–32

In *Monarchia* 14.3, Dante returns to the issue of the church’s involvement in temporal things, which flows from the ownership of property. In an effort to prove that divine law did not give the church the power (*virtutem*) to confer authority on the Roman prince, Dante writes:

But it [the power to confer authority on the Roman prince] did not come [to the church] by divine law either, for the whole of divine law is encompassed within the two Testaments, and I am quite unable to find in them that involvement in or concern for temporal things was recommended to the first or later priesthood. On the contrary, I find that the first priests were expressly enjoined to keep aloof from such involvement, as is clear from God’s words to Moses [Numbers 18:20 and 25]; as were the priests of the new order in Christ’s word to his disciples [Matt. 10:9]; freedom from such involvement would not be possible if the authority of temporal power flowed from the priesthood, since at the very least it would have had the responsibility for taking action to confer authority, and then for continual watchfulness lest the person on whom authority had been conferred deviate from the path of righteousness. (*Mon.* 3.14.4–5)⁷⁹

All of divine law, he says, is contained within the Old and New Testaments. Dante states that in reading these texts he has not been able to find

any scriptural authority to support the church's involvement in temporal affairs. On the contrary, he cites again the passages from Numbers and Matthew prohibiting both the Levites ("the first priests") and "the priests of the new order" from any involvement in or care for (*sollicitudinem sive curam*) temporal things. He goes on to say that if temporal power flowed from the priesthood, it would be impossible for the church to be free of such involvement and concern.

Dante drives this point home: "The power to confer authority on the realm (*regnum*) of our mortality [i.e., on temporal affairs] is in conflict with the nature of the church" (*Mon.* 3.15.1),⁸⁰ with the result that this cannot be numbered among the church's powers. What is the nature of the church? "The 'form' of the church is simply the life of Christ [*Forma autem Ecclesie nichil aliud est quam vita Cristi*]" (*Mon.* 3.15.3)⁸¹—as clear and as direct a statement as Dante makes anywhere that the whole church should follow the example of Christ in word and deed. He then says that Christ's "life was the model and exemplar for the church militant, especially for the pastors, and above all for the supreme pastor, whose task it is to feed the lambs and the sheep [John 21:16–17]" (*Mon.* 3.15.3).⁸² The implication clearly is that the pope's task is *only* to feed the lambs and the sheep and not to manage property, administer temporal authority, and meddle in temporal affairs; for these are things that Christ renounced for himself:

Christ renounced this kind of kingdom in the presence of Pilate, saying: "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence [John 18:36]." (*Mon.* 3.15.5)⁸³

Of course, Christ is Lord of this world, but "as a model for the church, he had no concern for this kingdom" (*Mon.* 3.15.6).⁸⁴ Instead of hungering after temporal power, the church "should speak in this same way and feel in this same way" (*Mon.* 3.15.8),⁸⁵ for it is in the very nature of the church to renounce this world: "From this we deduce that the power to confer authority on this earthly kingdom is in conflict with the nature of the church" (*Mon.* 3.15.9).⁸⁶ Dante concludes: "Thus we have sufficiently proved . . . that the authority of the empire in no way derives from the church" (*Mon.* 3.15.10).⁸⁷

The Text of the Donation of Constantine

Dante himself implies that his knowledge of the Donation is secondhand. In fact, he does not mention the text of the Donation directly, only claiming that “some people maintain” (*dicunt adhuc quidam*) that certain things are true:

Again, *some people* maintain that the emperor Constantine, cured of leprosy by the intercession of Sylvester who was then supreme Pontiff, made a gift (*donavit*) to the church of the seat of empire [i.e., Rome], along with many other imperial privileges (*dignitatibus*). From this they argue that since that time no one can take on those imperial privileges (*dignitates*) unless he receives them from the church, to whom (they say) they belong; and it would indeed follow from this that the one authority is dependent on the other, as they claim (*Mon.* 3.10.1–2; emphasis added).⁸⁸

Bruno Nardi claimed that Dante had no direct knowledge of Gratian’s text,⁸⁹ but Michele Maccarrone believed it to be Dante’s source.⁹⁰ The entire forged ninth-century *Constitutum Constantini* found its way into the Pseudo-Isidorian decretals.⁹¹ Gratian cut the text in half, leaving out the front end of the story, which told of Constantine’s leprosy, conversion, confession of faith, and baptism.⁹² From this point on the *Constitutum Constantini*, the Pseudo-Isidorian version, and Gratian’s text are virtually identical. They describe Constantine giving awards to Sylvester that are considerably more extensive and detailed than those Dante may have known or imagined. Beyond the ample adulation of Sylvester, the documents state that Constantine delivered to Sylvester and his successors, until the end of the world (*in finem mundi*),

our imperial Lateran Palace . . . then a diadem, that is, the crown of our head, and at the same time a tiara; and also, the shoulder band,—that is, the collar that usually surrounds our imperial neck; and also the purple mantle and crimson tunic, and all the imperial raiment; and the same rank as those presiding over the imperial cavalry; conferring also the imperial scepters, and, at the same time, the spears and standards; also the banners and different imperial ornaments, and all the advantage of our high imperial position, and the glory of our power.⁹³

The Lateran Palace had been equipped with a new baptistery, and Constantine also built two new churches for the pope: St. Peter’s and St.

Paul's. The documents make the clergy into senators, patricians, and consuls and grant other privileges, such as using saddle-cloths of white linen and wearing shoes made with goat's hair, that would allow them to process in imitation of imperial splendor. Sylvester, it says, would not put the imperial diadem on his head, but he did accept a tiara "of gleaming splendour representing the glorious resurrection of the Lord." The emperor took the part of groom, holding the bridle of Sylvester's horse. Furthermore, the emperor completely gave over and relinquished power and dominion to the pope and his successors permanently over "the city of Rome and all the provinces, districts and cities of Italy or of the western regions," for them to be "enduringly and happily possessed . . . for where the principality of the priesthood and of the Christian religion has been established, it is not just that an earthly emperor should have jurisdiction."⁹⁴ The *Constitutum Constantini*, in the part not copied by Gratian, went even further; in it Constantine, out of his largesse, conceded to Sylvester and his successors more distant lands, including Judea, Greece, Asia, Thrace, Africa, and Italy, as well as various islands.⁹⁵

This language is all very strong, much stronger than the hearsay information against which Dante makes his case against the Donation. The words *dote*, *patrimonium*, and *patrocinium* are nowhere to be found in any of the versions of the Donation. The word *possidenda* does appear, but, as we have seen, this is a term that Dante directly rejects.⁹⁶ Given his attitude toward the Donation in the *Commedia* and the *Monarchia*, we might expect that a close reading of the text would have pushed Dante to even sharper language.

Another possible source for Dante's information about the Donation also deserves consideration. In the *Vita sancti Sylvestri papae*, Constantine stops the "miserable ululation" of the mothers at the prospect of losing their babies by addressing the assembled crowd thus:

Hear me, counts and soldiers and all the people who are here: The authority of the Roman people was born in the fount of piety [*dignitas Romani populi de fonte nascitur pietatis*].⁹⁷

Dante repeats this phrase on two occasions: in *Monarchia* (2.5.5), where he explained that the Roman people took on the office of monarch by right, not by violence; and in his letter "To the Princes and Peoples of Italy" (*Ep.* 5.3), where he reminds his audience that Henry VII "is Caesar,

and his authority derives from the fountain of piety.”⁹⁸ F. E. Brightman discovered this phrase in a legend of St. Sylvester contained in a *passionale*, a set of texts to be read on various saints’ days, written 1204 by Matthew the Florentine. The *passionale* version makes it likely that the core features of the story of St. Sylvester were commonly known, and that Dante may even have heard the story of Sylvester in church on more than one occasion.⁹⁹ Both versions of the story list eight edicts by Constantine following his baptism and cure, but not one of these edicts concerns land, property, or imperial authority. Neither the *Legenda aurea* nor the *passionale* says anything about Constantine making a donation or gift to Sylvester of any kind. The closest Constantine comes to a donation is a promise to build a temple in his palace in the Lateran.¹⁰⁰

Dante might also have learned about the Donation from the pro-papal documents that emerged from the conflict between Henry VII and Clement V in 1312–14, where it is clear that those against whom Dante argues in *Monarchia* 3.10 believed that Constantine’s gift included temporal authority over the city of Rome, the Patrimony of St. Peter, and even over the emperor. Few of the official documents and treatises from this period repeat the elaborate language of Gratian and the *Constitutum Constantini*, but all of the papal documents say enough about the Donation to qualify the writers as the “some people” against whom Dante writes in *Mon.* 3.10.¹⁰¹

Dante’s Use of Legal Terms

There is no doubt that Dante was reasonably familiar with Roman and canon law and well enough informed about the two laws to consult the books of the *Corpus iuris civilis* of the emperor Justinian, the *Glossa ordinaria* of Franciscus Accursius,¹⁰² the *Decretum* of Gratian, and commentaries on canon law.¹⁰³ Scholars now agree that his approach to Roman law was one of an “amateur of genius rather than an expert.”¹⁰⁴ As a young politician in Florence and as a lord prior from June 15 to August 15, 1300, he would have inevitably become acquainted with civic statutes and provisions, and he actively participated in framing civil legislation. If he was in Bologna around 1304–6 or at any other time during the early years of his exile, he may have learned a good deal about both Roman and canon law. During these years he may exchanged poems with his friend, Cino

da Pistoia, who was well on his way to becoming one of the University of Bologna's most important jurists.¹⁰⁵

Regarding the Donation of Constantine, Dante's competence in the law is particularly important. Charles Davis points to Dante's lack of interest in legal detail and cites disagreements among scholars about the Donation as evidence of "how imprecise Dante's legal formulations can be."¹⁰⁶ But precision is one thing, detail is another. Dante's approach to law and sometimes to theology involved precise but often general statements.¹⁰⁷ The generally accepted notion that his first five arguments against the Donation of Constantine came from Roman law illustrates this point. Dante did not in fact take all of these arguments from Roman law; instead, he elaborated on the general principle that the empire could not be cut up into pieces because it then might eventually disappear.¹⁰⁸

Both Edward Peters and Lorenzo Valterza, among others, have established Dante's capacities with regard to Roman and canon law.¹⁰⁹ As a competent amateur, Dante's language about the Donation of Constantine and church property is remarkably precise and consistent throughout the *Commedia* and the *Monarchia*. Clearly Dante's role as a rhetorical poet and a reformer of secular and religious society trumped his role as a civil or canon lawyer,¹¹⁰ and his language in both the *Commedia* and the *Monarchia* serves the higher purpose given to him by Beatrice in *Purg.* 32.103–5. His prose and poetry are therefore more often than not infused with considerable vigor, but he nevertheless uses with significant care an abundance of canonical and civil legal terms regarding the Donation of Constantine and church property.

Some key terms that require explanation include *dignitas*, *dominium*, *proprietas*, *possession*, *sposa/sponsa*, *dote*, *patrimonia*, and *patrocinium*. Other frequently used words carry substantially the same meaning in Medieval Latin and in modern English; they do not call for further discussion. These words include *auctoritas*, *potestas*, *iurisdictio*, *deputare*, *dispensator*, and *collatio*. The word *dignitas* carries a meaning equivalent to the term *honors* in English law. It involves the respect normally associated with the word *dignity*, but more specifically *dignitas* was used in Roman law to refer to a high administrative office.¹¹¹ The emperor's *dignitas* was his official capacity as a ruler and the privileges that accompanied that official position.¹¹² Like the word *honors*, it could be used loosely as a reference to the property attached to the office. Dante uses some version of the word *dignitas* four times in *Monarchia* 3.10–11.¹¹³

Dominium in medieval Latin as in modern English denotes absolute or ultimate ownership. *Dominium* is title or ownership beyond which there is no claim.¹¹⁴ In Roman law, the Emperor was seen as *dominus mundi*, in both political and proprietary senses.¹¹⁵ By the late Middle Ages, Germanic law had contributed the element of proprietorship, or individual ownership of property.¹¹⁶ By this time, *dominium* was regarded as either universal ownership (*dominium eminens* or *universale*) or as effective ownership (*dominium utile* or *particulare*). *Dominium utile* or *particulare* was held by the vassal or the subordinate individual.¹¹⁷ Once the political and proprietary elements were blended, according to Ugo Nicolini, they were not clearly separated until the seventeenth century.¹¹⁸

Italian jurists sometimes translated *dominium* as *signoria* (lordship); today we might think of it as title to property.¹¹⁹ In medieval Latin *proprietas* was often used interchangeably with *dominium*, but *proprietas* carried the additional meaning of something owned by a private individual.¹²⁰ The words *dominium* and *proprietas* describe the ownership of property and all other tangible and intangible things that go with ownership.¹²¹ Property can be immobile (land, castles, roads, etc.), mobile (the fruit of the land, slaves, cattle, furniture, etc.), or intangible (legal rights, titles, offices, patronage, and defined personal relationships). The fundamental rights of *dominium* or *proprietas* are the rights to keep, use, rent, lend, and defend property or to alienate property by selling it or giving it away.¹²²

Dominion of property is accompanied by legal, economic, and political rights and powers. Dominion, legal rights, civil law, and political power became inextricably intertwined. Individual ownership of property (*proprietas*) is the starting point that leads to legal rights, temporal dominion, and political power, including (later) at the national level, sovereignty. The legal rights associated with property offered justification for armed violence to keep and protect what was owned. Hugh of St. Victor, in his widely influential book *De sacramentis* (On the sacraments), said that earthly power could be used for two reasons, "for just distribution and to defend against unjust attacks."¹²³ Defense against unjust attacks provided the rationale for just wars.

Possessio denoted the factual, physical control of a corporeal thing, combined with the intention to keep it under physical control.¹²⁴ It was not the same as *dominium*.¹²⁵ This situation involved the difference between who owns a thing (*de jure*) and who has it (*de facto*). Properties, offices, and other material goods were sold or given by those who enjoyed

dominium to others (normally subordinates or subjects) in implied perpetuity. Loans were given with fixed deadlines for the return of the thing loaned. When things were awarded to others without any deadline for return, they came to be regarded as in the *possessio* of the recipient, particularly when they were transferred from generation to generation. Dante uses the word *possessio* only three times in connection with the Donation of Constantine: in *Mon.* 2.10.3 he says that the church's resources are "male possessa," possibly meaning that they were abused but certainly meaning that they were wrongfully transferred to the church; in *Mon.* 3.10.15 he says that the Donation could not be received by the church "per modum possessionis"; and in *Mon.* 3.10.17 he says that the church could not receive the Donation "tanquam possessor." Dante therefore denies not only *dominium* of any kind but also *possessio* to the church.

The terms used in Roman law, canon law, and theology were not used by all writers in exactly the same way. From the strict perspective of Roman law the emperor's position as *dominus mundi* gave him *dominium* over everything in the world, a position that Dante clearly accepts, even though he does not repeat the epithet. In practice lay persons alienated their property by donating it or transferring *possessio* to the church through gifts and bequests. This was a one-way street, however. Lay property could come into the *possessio* of the church, but ecclesiastical property was not to be alienated without permission of the hierarchy. From the perspective of the church, a donation was an irrevocable gift of a corporeal thing made by a person capable of disposing of the corporeal thing and accepted by the church.¹²⁶ Whether from gratitude, insolvency, or fear of damnation, laymen donated more and more property to the church.¹²⁷ It was plain for all to see that a good deal of the landed property of Europe and of the wealth generated by the new market economy was finding its way into the coffers of the church, and it was no surprise that this occurred at the expense of the secular order, including the cities, the kingdoms, and the empire. By the year 1200 almost one quarter of all the property in Italy was in the hands of the church.¹²⁸

With reference to church property, Dante also used the words *sposa/sponsa* and *dote*. *Sponsalia* are marital promises that are mutual, true, freely exchanged, and manifest in public.¹²⁹ In his letter to the Ephesians (5:21–33), St. Paul says that the relationship between a husband and wife is like the relationship between Christ and the church. Referring to the church as the bride (*sponsa*) of Christ implies a holy, binding promise. When

Dante says (*Inferno* 19.1–4) that the “things of the God” (*le cose di Dio*) should be the brides (*spose*) of goodness or of good men, he accuses prelates of infidelity by committing adultery with “the things of God” for silver and gold, and he in effect condemns them for violating Christ’s promise to be faithful to his church.

A dowry (*dote*) is the gift of movable goods, service, or property awarded by the family of the bride or another benefactor to a couple that is married, for the support of the bride. While the husband could manage the dowry, he faced certain limitations in doing so, including the inability to alienate the property.¹³⁰ Upon dissolution of the marriage the dowry was frequently returned to the bride, to her family, or to her children, depending on the marriage contract.¹³¹ Some jurists described the dowry as a “patrimony of the woman” (*patrimonium mulieris*).¹³² In ecclesiastical terms, a dowry is an endowment for a church or a sum of money given for the support of a nun entering a convent.¹³³ Whether for a nun or a wife, the intent of the donor of the dowry must be respected. The giving of a dowry was an endowment, carrying with it the obligation to execute the intent of supporting the wife or the nun. In *Inferno* 19.116 Dante calls the act of Constantine’s generosity a dowry (*dote*), which was taken from the emperor by “the first rich Father” (Sylvester). Constantine’s benign intent to support the poor by awarding such a dowry to Sylvester was thereby violated even before the transfer of the gift because it was taken rather than freely given and accepted.

Property could also be awarded to the church by way of an endowment, a trust, a specific bequest, or a patrimony. While the first two terms are undoubtedly modern in usage, all four terms mean essentially the same thing: that the use but not the *dominium* of property is given over to the recipient, usually with a stated intent for the management and distribution of the property and its proceeds. In Dante’s time, lay persons awarded property to the church either as an outright gift, with no strings attached; as a bequest, with contingent responsibilities, such as the saying of masses for the soul of the deceased; as a patrimony (*patrimonium*), usually with some intention involved; or as a patronage or protectorate (*patrocinium*).

In Roman law the word *patrimonium* referred to the whole property of a person or to the property inherited from one’s father or ancestor.¹³⁴ Within the church, the word signified simply an estate or a domain controlled by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Patrimonies were not normally revocable; once given, they remained in the church because property

controlled by the church could not be alienated. However, the expectation remained that the intention of the giver, if any, would be honored. Failing that, it could be an open question as to whether the original giver could reclaim the property. After a generation or two, revocability became a moot question.

The word *patrocinium* denoted something else entirely. As Dante uses the word, it is perhaps best translated by the English “protectorate” or “guardianship.”¹³⁵ The word *patrocinium* has its origins in the late days of the Roman Empire, when slave owners granted freedom to some of their slaves and when small landowners put themselves under the patronage or protection of wealthy men as their *patroni*. In the first case, *patrocinium* described the “protective power of a master over a manumitted slave.” In the second, the small landowner’s property was transferred into the possession of the wealthy patron in return for ongoing protection.¹³⁶ In both cases, a patronage or protectorate involved the responsibility of the stronger party to ensure protection for the weaker party. When a layman built and endowed a new church or replaced a church that had been destroyed, it was called a *patrocinium*. With patronage, the patron acquired certain rights. For example, the patron was entitled to nominate a clergyman to fill the benefice, subject to the bishop’s approval. The patron was also entitled to be honored, to have precedence in processions to his church, to occupy a prominent seat at the church, and to receive support from the *patrocinium* should he ever become so impoverished as to be in need of such support. However, the bishop retained the right to approve the clerical candidate and to make the actual collation or transfer of the benefice to the recipient.¹³⁷ Patronage also involved the obligation on the part of the patron to defend and protect the church as well as to repair it when necessary.¹³⁸ The receiver of a *patrocinium* was legally dependent on the grantor. Property awarded in a *patrocinium* was not alienated by the award and could not be alienated by the recipient. Awarding a *patrocinium* could involve appointing a deputy or a person authorized to carry out certain functions in place of the owner. Use of the word *deputare* made it clear that the person to whom the patronage was delegated was not the officer or owner but rather someone responsible to the owner.¹³⁹

Hugh of St. Victor asserts that while the church may possess property, any rights to such property come under the law of the temporal power—not, by implication, under the law of the church. Princes sometimes give

possessions to the church only for the church to have use of them (*aliquando concedant solam utilitatem*), but at other times they grant both the use and the power (*potestatem*) over the things given. Even in the latter case it is incumbent on the entity that receives such possessions from a prince to acknowledge the source, to understand that possessions can never be alienated from the royal power, and to render the necessary subservience (*obsequium*) to the prince. He then defines church property as a *patrocinium* received from a royal power:

Just as the royal power cannot give away a *patrocinium* which it owes to another person, in that same way, when a possession [*possessio*] has been obtained by an ecclesiastical person the subservience [*obsequium*] which is due to the royal power cannot by law be denied. Because it is written: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21).¹⁴⁰

Here Hugh of St. Victor uses the critical word *patrocinium* in the way Dante does in *Monarchia* 3.10.¹⁴¹ Various versions of the word (*patronus*, *patronatus*, *patrocinare*, *patrocinium*, *patrocinialis*) were probably quite common in the Middle Ages, as they are now in the Romance languages. However, none of the popes, canonists, emperors, or Roman jurists used *patrocinium* to describe the Donation of Constantine, and scholars who have examined this passage have not called attention to Dante's use of this vital word.¹⁴²

This analysis suggests that Dante's language in *Monarchia* 3.10.16 regarding the Donation of Constantine is abundantly clear and precise. He says that the emperor could delegate (*deputare*) a patrimony and other things to the church as a protectorate (*in patrocinium Ecclesie Patrimonium et alia deputare*), as long as it did not change the superior temporal dominion of the emperor (*inmoto semper superiori dominio*)—and that the pope could receive such an award not even as possessor (actual controller) (*non tamquam possessor*) but as a deputy, an administrator, or a dispenser of the intent of the award, which was for the fruit of the property to be used for the poor of Christ (*tanquam fructum pro Ecclesie pro Cristi pauperibus dispensator*).¹⁴³ This after all is what the apostles were known to have done. The apostles did not own property; they acted as dispensers (*dispensatores*) of the resources that came to the church in behalf of the poor.¹⁴⁴

The question of whether or not Dante thought that the Donation of Constantine was an irrevocable gift remains. In the Middle Ages land was most often held in return for homage and military service. It was therefore

revocable if the vassal failed to fulfill his obligations. But a donation implied something else. In legal terms, a donation is “a legitimate transference of a thing belonging to one person to the *dominium* of another.”¹⁴⁵ Therefore, if Constantine’s gift were a donation, it would have been irrevocable because *dominium* had been transferred to Sylvester.¹⁴⁶ However, the forgers were apparently not that clever; the word “donation” does not appear in the *Constitutio Constantini*. Dante appears to have simply ignored this distinction, opting instead to consider the “Donation” of Constantine as a patrimony awarded to Sylvester in the form of a protectorate (*patrocinium*). Had the popes respected the emperor’s intent to have the resources used for Christ’s poor, the church would not have dragged the world into such an awful state.

Bruno Nardi pointed out that Roman law lists two reasons that a gift can be revoked: improper stewardship and ingratitude on the part of the receiver of the gift. He quoted Justinian’s *Institutes*, which stipulate that for ingratitude and other reasons a gift (*donatio*) can be revoked:

It is well understood that even when gifts are fully given, if the men to whom a benefice has been transferred are ungrateful, the donors may in certain cases revoke the gift, according to our constitutions; lest those who bestowed their things on others should suffer injury or cost, according to the rules expressed in our constitution.¹⁴⁷

In discussing the resources of the church (*ecclesie facultates*), Dante says that they were not gratefully accepted (*nec . . . cum gratitudine teneantur*) and were badly possessed or used (*bene data, male possessa*) and that they should therefore be returned where they came from. *Redeant unde venerunt* (*Mon.* 2.10.2–3).

Redeant—let them return (*Mon.* 2.10.3): this is one of the much-disputed words among those who have studied the manuscripts of the *Monarchia*. Gustavo Vinay¹⁴⁸ and Michele Barbi¹⁴⁹ accepted the present subjective *redeant*,¹⁵⁰ but Pier Giorgio Ricci, for the official 1965 text of the Italian Dante Society insisted on using the present tense *redeunt* (they return) because all but two of the manuscripts contain this reading.¹⁵¹ Bruno Nardi took vigorous exception to this reading and argued forcefully for *Redeant* on the grounds that only this reading makes sense.¹⁵² For the 2009 official text of the Italian Dante Society, Prue Shaw accepted Nardi’s *redeant*,¹⁵³ and her translation reads “Let them return where they came from.” If Dante intended for this phrase to recall the Donation of

Constantine, he appears to be saying that the emperor could and should revoke the Donation and that the church should allow the emperor to take back the properties and powers supposedly awarded to the popes.¹⁵⁴

This review of Dante's use of legal terms should make it clear that, regarding the Donation of Constantine, his language in *Monarchia* and the *Commedia* was anything but imprecise.¹⁵⁵ Dante was exceptionally clear in stating that (1) the emperor could not give away any part of the empire, (2) the church could not receive the Donation because it has no right to own property, (3) the Donation could instead be considered a patrimony delegated to the church as a protectorate, and (4) the "donation" should in any case be returned to the emperor.

The Early Commentators

The early commentators shed little light either on the Donation of Constantine or the church's right to own property.¹⁵⁶ One of the most important of the early commentators was Dante's own son, Pietro, who was trained in law at the University of Bologna.¹⁵⁷ John Scott has called attention to "Pietro's valiant attempt to prove Dante's complete orthodoxy."¹⁵⁸ In this context we would not expect Pietro to highlight Dante's radical approach to the Donation of Constantine, his insistence that the church should not own property, or his emphasis on the model of the apostolic church.

Almost all of the early commentators who discussed *Inferno* 19.115–17 blame Constantine for the trouble that ensued, even though they agree that his intentions were good.¹⁵⁹ None of them blames Sylvester or notes that it was he who took the gift from the emperor. Most early commentators say that the church was poor before the Donation and that it became wealthy and corrupt afterward. Many say that Constantine left Sylvester with the *signoria* or temporal jurisdiction of Rome.

Opinion among the early commentators was even more solid with regard to the eagle leaving its feathers on the chariot of the church in *Purgatorio* 32.124–29. All but one of those who comment on this passage see the empire as the eagle and the Donation as the feathers. But none of them explains the meaning of *navicella* in *Purgatorio* 32.129. Instead, many of them, following Jacopo della Lana and Pietro di Dante, quote a different phrase to explain the cry from Heaven: *Hodie diffusum est venenum in*

ecclesia Dei (today poison is diffused into the church of God).¹⁶⁰ Only John of Serravalle (1416–17) goes into more detail about the intent of the gift. He says that just as Constantine gave the Donation with good intention, so Sylvester received it with equally good intention.¹⁶¹ With due respect for Dante's opinion, John says, even kings and other lords in the present day want the pope to give up the church's income, but his own opinion is that there are many good clergy around and that "it would not be a good thing for the church to lose its possessions and its [temporal] dominion in any way."¹⁶²

When Justinian points out "the next one there" in *Paradiso* 20.55–60, the reference to Constantine is clear to all the early commentators. Jacopo della Lana, L'Ottimo Commento, and the Anonimo Fiorentino go into more depth than the others, trying to explain how Constantine's good intention could have landed him in Heaven even though his act bore such bad fruit that it resulted in the destruction of the world. Jacopo and the Anonimo Fiorentino point out that Aristotle in the third book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* explains that evil itself is ignorant of the intent of an act (*omnes malus est ignorans*); therefore the evil of an act flows from the intent of the actor. Constantine's intention could not generate a bad result unless his intent were evil or the intent of the recipient were corrupt.¹⁶³ Therefore, the only way that the bad result (the destruction of the world) could occur would be through the evil intent of the recipients, that is, Sylvester and his successors. Constantine's benevolent intent is in no way responsible for the deplorable state of the world; the burden of guilt lies directly on the papacy.

Surviving the Long Nineteenth Century

Further discussion of the issues of the Donation of Constantine and church property awaited the revival of interest in the *Commedia* and Dante's other works that took place in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is worth remembering in this context that the *Monarchia* remained on the Index of Prohibited books until 1881.¹⁶⁴ In contrast to the early commentators these early nineteenth-century critics saw Dante as a vigorous opponent of the church and, by implication, an ardent supporter of incipient Italian nationalism. Vincenzo Monti, Gabriele Rossetti, and Ugo Foscolo emphasized Dante's role as a religious and political

reformer. Giuseppe Mazzini, the best-known representative of this view, saw Dante as “the citizen, the reformer, the religious apostle, the prophet of the nation.”¹⁶⁵ For the publicists of the Risorgimento, Dante became a nationalist, the apostle of a unified Italy. It was clear to them that Italy could become a nation only at the expense of the Papal States. They read Dante’s arguments against the Donation of Constantine, and particularly against the church’s right to own property, as justification for expropriating the Papal States and the city of Rome, by force if necessary. The popes made it necessary.¹⁶⁶

The army of the new Kingdom of Italy captured Rome in September of 1870. Pius IX and his successors froze into an attitude of recalcitrance, refused to accept the nation’s authority to confiscate papal territory, and declared themselves to be “prisoners of the Vatican.” It was not until 1929 that Pius XI finally signed the Lateran Concordat that created the modern state of Vatican City. In this environment Father Francesco Berardinelli wrote *Il dominio temporale dei papi nel concetto politico di Dante Alighieri*, urgently underlining the religious and Roman Catholic culture of Dante’s work, strongly defending the church’s right to own property, and flatly denying that Dante’s reading of the Donation of Constantine and his criticism of corrupt prelates in any way suggested that the papacy could not rightfully own the Patrimony of St. Peter and the Papal States.¹⁶⁷ Berardinelli asserted that he wrote both against the partisans of the revolution, who were out to destroy Catholicism, and against those aristocratic liberals who admitted that Dante was a Catholic Christian¹⁶⁸ but insisted that he was nevertheless an Italian patriot. As a result of his study, Father Berardinelli was able to “demonstrate apodictically that Dante never excluded from his political system the temporal dominion and the civil principality of the popes.”¹⁶⁹

Meanwhile, scholars such as Giosuè Carducci and Francesco De Sanctis worked to lift the study of Dante above current political interpretations,¹⁷⁰ while others, such as Giacomo Poletto, worked to make Dante safe for Catholicism.¹⁷¹ Alberto Buscaino Campo wrote a response Poletto, accusing him and others of saying that Dante was the most Catholic of writers, a paragon of orthodoxy, and that he embraced papal sovereignty.¹⁷²

Near the turn of the twentieth century, the literary critic Francesco d’Ovidio and the historian G. B. Siragusa exchanged point and counter-point essays in a fashion somewhat reminiscent of the *tenzone* between

Dante and Forese Donati. The controversy began in 1897 with D'Ovidio's remark, based on *Monarchia* 2.10, that "Dante did not deny the church the right to have material goods."¹⁷³ D'Ovidio did not mention the crucial passage about church property in *Monarchia* 3.10. While he did admit that the church's property is a patrimony, he then asserted that the patrimony was possessed by the church, despite Dante's "non tanquam possessor" (*Mon.* 3.10.17).¹⁷⁴ Siragusa countered in 1899 with an article in *Giornale dantesco* upbraiding D'Ovidio for ignoring *Mon.* 3.10, the most important passage regarding church property in the treatise, where he says that Dante's position is "chiara, intera ed esplicita" (clear, whole, and explicit). But in the end he effectively agreed with D'Ovidio: "The church can possess, not in the way of a proprietary interest but rather as the administrator of temporal things to the benefit of the poor."¹⁷⁵ He called this a *via di mezzo* (a middle way) between those who say that the church can or cannot possess property.¹⁷⁶

Offended as much by Siragusa's tone as by his statements, D'Ovidio responded condescendingly that the *Monarchia* 3.10 passage was "facile e ovvio."¹⁷⁷ He repeated his assertion that "Dante's teaching . . . was not an isolated opinion, it reflected the teaching of the luminaries of the church," and stated that "Dante not only didn't care whether the church possessed some small corner of land . . . he even admitted it."¹⁷⁸ As for the transformation of the church into a true monarchy, however, D'Ovidio stated that Dante would have objected to such a result—an outcome that had, in fact, been thoroughly realized by 1300 and was visible to all in 1900.

In England, Edward Moore in 1899 weighed in with his essay on Dante's religious teaching,¹⁷⁹ but the primary focus of his article was on the question of Dante's orthodoxy vis-à-vis the Roman Catholic theology at the turn of the century. He did state that Dante "declares that the church has no right to hold even any temporal possessions whatsoever" but appears to contradict this by saying that there is "no proof that [Dante] would have resented the claim for the small amount of 'temporal power' which is maintained to-day."¹⁸⁰

Meanwhile, Felice Tocco could not resist commenting on the D'Ovidio / Siragusa *tenzone*, agreeing with Siragusa regarding the "middle way" and repeating that Dante "well admits that the church can possess" and "accept donations and possess a patrimony," but endorsing

D'Ovidio's view that this did not mean that he accepted a papal political dominion that could be substituted for imperial authority.¹⁸¹ In his *Quel che non c'è nella "Divina Commedia," o Dante e l'eresia*, Tocco used the passage in *Paradiso* 6.94–96, where Justinian says that Charlemagne came to the aid of the church against the Lombards in 774, as evidence that Dante accepted the popes' right to the patrimony because they castigated the Lombards who tried to take the patrimony from them and praised Charlemagne for coming to their defense.¹⁸² However, is it one thing to say that the *Santa Chiesa* (l. 95) needed the emperor's support at that time and another to say that this amounted to an endorsement of the church's right to property and temporal power. D'Ovidio, Siragusa, and Tocco failed to explain the word *patrocinium* or to note that Dante says that the emperor could give such a patronage only if his superior ownership were not changed (*inmoto semper superiori dominio*) (*Mon.* 3:10.16).

The consensus that D'Ovidio, Siragusa, and Tocco expressed about the papacy's ownership of the patrimony, despite their differences on other points, seemed to satisfy the literary and historical worlds for some time. If not the most Catholic of Catholics, Dante appeared at least to be safe for the Roman Catholic Church. Now that the *Monarchia* was off the Index, no one need fear that the divine poet was a heretic. The partisan positions of the Risorgimento were left behind, and attention could be focused on the "scientific" study of literature and history.

It was not until 1942 that Bruno Nardi, already a mature scholar, published a major article on Dante and the Donation of Constantine in *Studi Danteschi*.¹⁸³ This was the first thorough attempt to place Dante's position on the Donation and church property in the context of canon law, theology, civil lawyers, and church reformers. Nardi recognized that Dante rejected the political dominion of the patrimony of St. Peter and denied the church's right to own property, but he did not fully elaborate on this point.¹⁸⁴ Nardi's article prompted a somewhat spicy exchange between himself and Michele Maccarrone, who weighed in with articles on hierocratic theory in *Purgatorio* 16 in 1950, on theology and canon law in *Mon.* 3.3 in 1952, and on the third book of the *Monarchia* in 1955,¹⁸⁵ only to be countered by Nardi in 1960 with an article directly addressing Maccarrone's contributions.¹⁸⁶ These articles are the foundation for all subsequent studies of Dante and the Donation of Constantine.

The Context of Dante's Ideas: The Visual Sources

Historians and literary critics have long sought to identify the “sources” of Dante’s *Commedia* and his other work in an effort to make better sense of the poet’s words and to enrich their meaning. The method has traditionally focused on text; more recently it has included visual evidence as well. Detailed analysis of the words and images left behind by Dante and others might convince us that he drew from a particular text or image. Often commentators have performed this kind of analysis in a genuine attempt to elucidate what Dante wrote; sometimes, it has been done to reinforce the writer’s own point of view.

With all due respect to textual and visual analysis, we should pause to consider that Dante was a human being who was surrounded by family, friends, acquaintances, strangers, opponents, and enemies as well as by texts and images. He saw things and had conversations with the people he met, and those sights and conversations must have fed the stream of information and ideas that flowed into and out of his brain. As “scientific” scholars or scholarly historians, we must understand that texts and images operate in a broad, interactive context that includes (at least) conversations that are forever lost. Trying to identify a new “source” has become a game. A more prudent—and, I submit, scientific or scholarly—approach is to elucidate Dante’s words by describing the broad context in which his thought was developed. This approach suggests keeping in mind where Dante was and whom he may have known, as well as what he may have read, when we analyze both his texts and theirs.

A few scholars have called attention to two fresco cycles that existed in Dante’s day that depicted the Donation of Constantine, and one of them has been suggested as a source for some of Dante’s ideas. Only a few blocks up the street from the Lateran, the chapel at the palace of Quattro Coronati in Rome contains an eight-panel treatment of the sickness and baptism of Constantine, the Donation itself, and of Sylvester blessing the emperor in such a way as to underline the superiority of the pope. This cycle, painted in the 1240s, has been thoroughly studied by Ronald Herzman and William Stephany.¹⁸⁷ There is no doubt that the Quattro Coronati frescoes express a strong hierocratic point of view and that Dante argued against such a view in *Monarchia* 3.10. However, the likelihood that Dante ever saw the chapel is somewhat tenuous. The two possible occasions would have been the two trips he might have made to Rome.

The first dates from 1300, when he could have joined the pilgrims seeking the plenary indulgence offered by Boniface VIII's proclamation of the Jubilee.¹⁸⁸ The second would have been in October of 1301, when he was sent by the Commune of Florence as an ambassador to treat with the pope, presumably about the threat of Charles of Valois entering the city.¹⁸⁹ Dino Compagni says that Boniface VIII sent two of the ambassadors scurrying home shortly after they arrived, and it appears likely that he detained Dante for an indefinite period.¹⁹⁰

If Dante was detained in Rome by Boniface VIII, there is a reasonable chance that he could have been taken to the palace of Quattro Coronati, where he might even have seen the frescoes in the chapel. There he would have seen a strong presentation of the stories contained in the eighth-century *Constitutum Constantini*, with a distinct emphasis on the pope's superiority over the emperor. Interestingly, there is no hint in this fresco cycle of the position adopted by Innocent IV (who was pope during the time when they were painted) that the Donation was a restoration and confirmation of property, imperial power, and temporal dominion over things previously given to Peter by Christ. If the Quattro Coronati cycle influenced Dante in 1300 or 1301, it did so as did other accounts of the Donation, by presenting the story against which Dante would react.

The other fresco cycle in Rome depicting the Donation of Constantine was in a very public place: the portico of the Lateran Palace, built to demonstrate the power of the papacy at the time of the Jubilee of 1300. Boniface may have engaged Giotto to paint these frescoes, though there is no solid evidence for this.¹⁹¹ Only one small piece of the cycle still exists: the picture of Boniface VIII on the new portico, flanked by his prelates, blessing the pilgrims below who had come to Rome for the Jubilee. This fragment is preserved and visible to the public in the Basilica of St. John Lateran. Thanks to Onorio Panvinio, who described the frescoes in 1570 (16 years before most of them were destroyed), we know that the full cycle showed the conversion and baptism of Constantine, his gift of the crown of Rome to Sylvester, the decay of the Lateran, and Boniface's restoration of the palace and the basilica.¹⁹² Depending on when the frescoes were completed and on whether Dante went to Rome as a pilgrim in 1300 or 1301, he may have seen them. If he and Giotto were friends at this early date, he would certainly have taken this opportunity to view Giotto's fresh work in the Lateran portico. But the frescoes

depicted a scene that turned out later to be alien to Dante's political philosophy; furthermore, we shall never know exactly how they told the story of Sylvester and Constantine; nor shall we ever know whether these images influenced Dante's thinking. Regarding the Lateran frescoes, it is noteworthy that Boniface VIII would make such a strong point about the Donation in these images while, as we shall see, he avoided basing his claims to temporal power on Constantine's gift.¹⁹³

Both fresco cycles presented the hierocratic point of view. Of the Quattro Coronati frescoes, Gray Dickson says, "The political iconography of the scene affirms papal *plenitudo potestatis*, foreshadowing the conclusion of *Unam sanctam* . . . This was a theocratic statement indeed."¹⁹⁴ Discussing the Lateran cycle, Charles Mitchell sees the purpose of "the decoration of the loggia as illustrating Boniface's claim to be heir to Constantine and his appeal to buttress his secular pretensions."¹⁹⁵ In both cases the visual iconography presented ideas that Dante argued against rather than for, and in both cases other more easily available sources exist for the concepts embedded in the frescoes. While Dante may well have seen both of these fresco cycles, nothing in his writings indicates an interest in the Donation for at least another decade, and nothing appears in these images that Dante would not have encountered elsewhere.

Early Acquaintances and Textual Sources

Whatever he drew from images, Dante clearly relied on the text of Scripture to inform his position on the Donation of Constantine and church property. Other than this obvious source, what was the broad context in which Dante's thought developed? In order to understand Dante better, it seems logical first to look at the people whom he may have known personally, or to written works with which he was familiar, or both.¹⁹⁶

To begin with, Dante was imbued with the thought of the Franciscan order.¹⁹⁷ There is no doubt that he drew from the ideas of St. Francis himself, from Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, and from the rigorist or spiritual wing of the Franciscan order, which was in turn influenced by the mystical and prophetic writings of Joachim of Fiore, the late twelfth-century Calabrian abbot. It is apparent that Dante was directly acquainted with perhaps only one of Joachim's works, the *Liber figurarum*,¹⁹⁸ but he could well have known of Joachim's ideas from other sources. Bonaventure was one of the sources for Dante's portrait of the life of Francis, told

by Thomas Aquinas in Canto 12 of *Paradiso*,¹⁹⁹ and he may have known some of Bonaventure's other works as well,²⁰⁰ but we have no clear evidence that Dante was acquainted with his great work defending the Franciscan concept of poverty, the *Apologia pauperum*. The two most significant Franciscans whom Dante probably knew personally were Peter Olivi and Ubertino da Casale. Most scholars now agree that Dante most likely made their acquaintance while both were in Florence teaching at Santa Croce in 1285–87 and that his comment in the *Convivio* that he attended “the schools of the religious orders and the disputations held by the philosophers” (*Conv.* 2.12.7) included study at the Franciscan church of Santa Croce.²⁰¹ However, the full import of the influence of Olivi and Ubertino did not appear in his work until some twenty years later.²⁰² Both Olivi and Ubertino drew heavily on the work of Bonaventure, especially in their understanding of Franciscan poverty, but both went well beyond Bonaventure in certain areas.

As for Joachim of Fiore, Dante would have found no precedents for his position on the Donation of Constantine in his works. Joachim definitely sided with the hierocratic theologians and canonists who supported papal power in the temporal realm. Not only did Joachim see the pope as “both king and priest,” but he also saw Constantine's gift of imperial dignities in the Donation as the return of something for which the emperor was indebted to Christ.²⁰³ For Joachim, the age of Constantine was a time of freedom and peace, an age of spiritual contemplation in which the infusion of the Holy Spirit inspired the great doctors of the early church. As for the acquisition of property and temporal power, Joachim saw no problem with glorifying the church in this way, for was not Christ both priest and king?²⁰⁴ Furthermore, the spiritual renovation that would take place in Joachim's third age of the Holy Spirit would be purely an age of monasticism, with no room for an emperor or civil society.²⁰⁵

Nor was Bonaventure a source for Dante's view of the Donation of Constantine. He ignores the Donation altogether and mentions Constantine only on rare occasions. In one *quaestio* he asks whether it is better to correct one rich man than many poor ones. Responding affirmatively, he offers the example of the conversion of Constantine, an act that benefited the church more than the conversion of many other people.²⁰⁶ In a sermon he remarks that God revealed the sign of the cross to only two people, Francis and Constantine—Francis on receiving the stigmata and Constantine before the battle of the Milvian Bridge.²⁰⁷ His description of

the ages of church history, influenced in part by Joachim, presents the third age beginning with Sylvester as a wonderful period for the church, during which the great doctors benefited from peace and universal rule. He does not mention the Donation; the only reference to Constantine is to his move to Byzantium.²⁰⁸

Dante's argument in *Monarchia* 3.10 that Constantine did not grant *dominium* to the papacy was clearly rooted in Franciscan tradition. Francis himself was explicit in requiring his followers to imitate the poverty of Christ and the apostles.²⁰⁹ The Rule of 1223 declared that the friars should not "appropriate anything to themselves, neither a house, or a place, or any other thing."²¹⁰ Gregory IX issued *Quo elongati* in 1230 in an attempt to clarify that Franciscan poverty meant that the friars "ought not to have *proprietas*, either individual or in common," and that they could use movable items (e.g., books) and immovable things (property, buildings), so long as the *dominium* of these goods was kept by those to whom they are known to belong.²¹¹ Fifteen years later Innocent IV in *Ordinem vestrum* virtually copied the first part of this passage from Gregory IX, but instead of leaving ownership of Franciscan goods with the donors, he accepted papal *dominium* of Franciscan property.²¹²

Bonaventure may have been a source for Dante's understanding of *dominium*. It was left to him to elaborate on the meaning of the word in the Franciscan context. In the *Apologia pauperum*, written in 1269 to defend the Franciscan observance of poverty against secular theologians at the University of Paris,²¹³ Bonaventure says that the highest form of poverty involves the total renunciation of *dominium*, both individually and in common. In a passage that parallels Dante's point about the proper disposition required for the receiver of a gift, Bonaventure stresses the intention of the Friars Minor to have no *dominium* over property.²¹⁴ He later quotes (as Dante does) Matthew 10:9–10 ("Do not possess gold nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor scrip for your journey").²¹⁵ Bonaventure goes on to explain that the purse or bag that Jesus permitted in Luke 22:35–36 was a temporary concession to the apostles traveling in hostile Samaria but was not meant to denote the highest form of poverty,²¹⁶ where Dante simply says that despite the relaxation in Luke, he has not been able to determine that "the church was ever granted permission to possess gold or silver" (*Mon.* 3.10.14). Bonaventure explicates a third text mentioned by Dante, the passage from Acts 3:6 where the apostles pooled their goods and held them "not as owner but as administrator of the fruits of the

church for Christ's poor" (*Mon.* 3.10.17). Here Bonaventure says that the concession was to the crowd; in no way was it a license for the apostles to possess anything, either individually or in common.²¹⁷

For Bonaventure as for Dante, apostolic poverty was the proper form of the church. Speaking of the injunction just discussed against gold and silver, Bonaventure says: "In these words, the Lord imposed on the apostles and preachers of the truth the form of serving on the apostles and preachers of the truth in so far as not caring for not only possessions but also money and other movable goods."²¹⁸ Unlike Dante, however, Bonaventure does not apply this standard of poverty to the whole church. It is a special commandment meant only for those who wished strictly to imitate the life of Christ.²¹⁹

While we do not know whether Dante was directly acquainted with Bonaventure's *Apologia pauperum*, the parallel treatments of these three passages from the Gospel would suggest that possibility. But a very important difference remains: Bonaventure is clear that the standard of apostolic poverty is for the Franciscan order, not for the whole church.²²⁰ Bonaventure did not object to the church's ownership of property, including of course papal *dominium* of Franciscan property. He affirmed that the wealth of prelates is not contrary to perfection, but neither is it safe. But to say that the church's ownership of possessions is tantamount to corruption, he says, is heresy.²²¹ Bonaventure decried abuses of poverty within his own order,²²² and he insisted on the strictest standard of poverty for all Franciscans.²²³ He may have criticized the secular clergy, but (unlike Olivi and Ubertino) he avoided attacks on the hierarchy.²²⁴ Bonaventure never questioned the temporal power of the papacy.

Similarly, neither Olivi nor Ubertino saw the Donation of Constantine as the critical step in the decline of the church or as a keystone of their suggestions that the entire church should be poor. Since a large portion of Olivi's works remain in manuscript form, it is impossible at this point to identify all the passages in which he might have mentioned the Donation of Constantine. However, Olivi deals with the Donation, the temporal power of the papacy, and church property in one particular treatise that has received remarkably little attention, given its title: *An papa habeat universalissimam potestatem* (Whether the pope has universal power).²²⁵ Olivi's response was in the negative. One reason he gives is that "whatever earthly power Constantine gave to the pope, it follows from that same donation that this power was not previously the pope's, neither via

Christ's commission to Peter nor via the spiritual power itself."²²⁶ Here Olivi directly rejects Innocent IV's notion that the Donation is a restitution of authority that the pope had all along. However, Olivi says, it doesn't matter anyway because temporal power can be gained and lost in many ways: "Non est nobis nunc cure" ([the Donation of Constantine] is not now our concern).²²⁷ Olivi demonstrates no interest here in the Donation, nor is there any vestige of the concept that the Donation was the cause of the degeneration of the world. He reveals no trace of Dante's insistence that the emperor's temporal authority comes from God.²²⁸ Based on this passage, Decima Douie says that Olivi regarded the Donation "as revocable at the whim of the secular power by whose authority it had originally been bestowed."²²⁹ Dante, of course, shared the idea of the revocability of the Donation, but he differs from Olivi in seeing the Donation as the beginning of the downfall of the church. Olivi, in fact, passes off the Donation rather lightly. While church property might be revocable by the temporal authority, Olivi does not argue for confiscation by the emperor or anyone else.²³⁰

David Burr and Charles Davis have pointed out that Olivi's view of the age of Constantine elsewhere was essentially positive. In fact, Olivi said that Constantine bound Satan by expelling idolatry from the city of Rome, he compared Constantine's support of Christianity to the Pharaoh who favored Joseph,²³¹ and he saw the time after Constantine as the dawn of a new age following the great persecutions in which the great doctors thrived.²³² In the *Lectura super Apocalipsim*, Olivi goes to far as to say that the church was "usefully and reasonably" allowed to have property from the time of Constantine through the fifth age.²³³

Elsewhere in *An papa*, Olivi makes other points with which Dante would have agreed. The pope does not have temporal dominion over the whole world, he says, because if Christ had wanted the popes to be temporal rulers, he would have made them rich instead of commissioning them to live in the most extreme poverty.²³⁴ In support of this he cites Matthew 10:9 and Acts 3:6, suggesting that the hierarchy should practice poverty.²³⁵ Unlike Dante and Bonaventure, he does not here address the relaxation mentioned in Luke 22:35–36, but he adds that Christ gave the apostles no wider power over temporal things than to eat what they were given (Luke 10:7) and to have only the things necessary to their office.²³⁶

For Olivi as for Dante, the proper form or model for the church was the life of poverty established by Christ and the apostles.²³⁷ At one point

Olivi expressed the hope that all bishops would follow the life of evangelical perfection, which of course included practicing strict poverty: "Let us imagine that all bishops today were to live according to the counsel of Christ as did the apostles, and especially with regard to poverty and even poor use so that the Church's temporal goods would be used for the poor . . . is it not possible that the faithful and even the infidels would be brought back to God in an incomparably more full and more perfect way?"²³⁸ For Olivi, *usus pauper* involved the daily practice of living in the strictest poverty, coupled with the intention to avoid all worldly things. *Usus pauper* was the high standard that Olivi insisted on for all Franciscans, and he even claimed that *usus pauper* was integral to the Franciscan vow. However, Olivi does not insist on strictly applying the evangelical standard of poverty to the whole church after the reign of Constantine until the present day.

In the end, Olivi's position on church property reveals an ambivalence not found in Dante. On the one hand, he offers the evangelical life of poverty as a model for the whole church; on the other hand, he offers a concession to ecclesiastical possessions in the ages following Constantine.²³⁹ Church property is revocable, but he sees no need for an emperor to step in and relieve the church of its riches, even though property and temporal power have led to serious abuses in the church.²⁴⁰ In describing the twelve characteristics for a perfect prelate or pope, he does not even mention evangelical poverty.²⁴¹

In *An papa* Olivi approvingly quotes a long passage from the chapter of Hugh of St. Victor's *De sacramentis* entitled "Quomodo ecclesia terrena possideat" (How the church possesses earthly things). As we have seen, in this chapter Hugh says that the church possesses temporal power only from the temporal authority, that the church's temporal possessions are under the civil law, that they are revocable, and that the church holds its possessions as a *patrocinium* (protectorate), because Christ said, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matt. 22:21).²⁴² It may very well be that Dante picked up the critical word *patrocinium* and the concept behind it from this chapter of Hugh of St. Victor and that he learned of it through Olivi's *An papa*.²⁴³

Olivi's disciple Ubertino da Casale was no more focused than Olivi on the Donation of Constantine as the beginning of ecclesiastical decline. Writing in 1305, Ubertino mentions Constantine only in passing, and he fails to say anything about the Donation. The time of Constantine, he

says, was a time of clear teaching and contemplation and of the doctors of the church and the anchorites.²⁴⁴ In his list of the ages of the church, he says that the third age began with Constantine, but he gives equal importance to the Council of Nicea.²⁴⁵ He does not see the decline of the church beginning until the current, fifth age.²⁴⁶

Ubertino was more strident than Olivi in condemning the abuses of the fifth age, going beyond his mentor to deny the validity of Celestine V's resignation. For Ubertino the resulting election was not only invalid, but it produced, in Boniface VIII and Benedict XI, popes who were themselves the veritable Antichrist, Babylon the Great, the whore of the Apocalypse who fornicated with the kings of earth.²⁴⁷ However, it is one thing to criticize the clergy for their misbehavior and another to hold up evangelical poverty as a standard for all clergy and prelates. Ubertino does this more clearly and consistently than Olivi. He addresses the topic in a sermon embedded in the first book of the *Arbor*, where Marino Damiata says that he demands of the secular clergy a respect for poverty no less severe than that of the Franciscans.²⁴⁸ Poverty was not only for the Franciscans, and Francis was not the only icon of the apostolic life. Prelates of the present day, he says, have forgotten Augustine, Dominic, Bernard, Benedict, and Basil, as well as Francis.²⁴⁹

For Ubertino, the life of apostolic poverty was the proper form for the entire hierarchy. Poverty meant renunciation of all possession. Ubertino decried the luxury, the precious chalices, the majestic palaces, and the voracious appetite of the prelates for worldly goods.²⁵⁰ For him the renunciation of such possessions was the outer expression of a deep inner conversion to reject all things earthly in favor of all things spiritual. E. Randolph Daniel has reminded us that Ubertino's underlying point was that "conversion was first of all a total renovation of the interior man. He must reorient his entire self, emotional, intellectual, volitional, and spiritual, toward complete conformity to the crucified Christ."²⁵¹

Not all Franciscans were in complete accord with the opinions and beliefs of Olivi, Ubertino, and those who had come to be called the Spiritual faction within the order. Many members of the overall Franciscan community were content to feign poverty while living, eating, drinking, and studying comfortably in palatial churches and convents. The story of the internal disputes within the order is too complex to be told here, but it is worth mentioning that in the years leading up to the Council of Vienne in 1314, Ubertino found himself to be the principal spokesman

for the Spirituals and the chief defender of Olivi's work and writings, and especially those focused on Franciscan poverty.²⁵² While accepting renunciation of *dominium*, both Olivi and Ubertino went beyond that to stress the importance of austerity in the life of a proper Franciscan, an idea phrased as *usus pauper*, the way of strictest poverty.

Although Dante never used the term *usus pauper*, the standard which he held forth for the church throughout both the *Commedia* and the *Monarchia* was one of strict poverty—a principle on which he insisted not only for the Franciscan order but for the whole church.²⁵³ Like Ubertino, Dante offers a parade of paragons of poverty, including Peter, Paul and Mary; the popes Linus, Cletus, Sixtus, Pius, Callixtus, and Urban; Peter Damian and Bernard of Clairvaux; and Dominic and Francis.²⁵⁴ The concept behind *usus pauper* was certainly territory shared by Olivi, Ubertino, and Dante.

However, when it came to the different question of the proper order of the world and the divinely ordered relationship between the papacy and the empire, Dante parted ways with his Franciscan teachers. Olivi and Ubertino could hardly be less interested in the empire or in the idea of a secular order offering its own earthly beatitude, structured under the unity of the emperor. For both Olivi and Ubertino, the world and the church were one. While they may have disapproved of the pope's excessive role in temporal affairs, they tended to think of the world as the church and the church as the world. Ubertino's relentlessly Christocentric view of the world precluded any room for a temporal authority that was not subordinated to the church.²⁵⁵ Olivi identifies the woman clothed with the sun in Apocalypse 12 as the church, a figure most often identified as the Virgin Mary.²⁵⁶ When the dragon threatens her, she is saved by receiving the two wings of the great eagle, which allow her to soar to a place of nourishment (Apoc. 12:13–14). Her persecution took place, Olivi says, until the conversion of Constantine, when she was given the two wings of temporal and spiritual powers that bore her aloft:

Likewise the imperial or temporal power and the spiritual power over the whole world are the two wings. Although according to the proper order of things the spiritual power should have the first place, it is nevertheless evident and efficacious that the Roman empire should be its servant and devoted subject [*subiectum*].²⁵⁷

Although Dante believed that the emperor “should show that reverence toward Peter that a first-born son should show his father” (*Mon.* 3.16.18),

he is very clear that “the Roman Prince is not in any way subject (*non subiaceat*) to the Roman Pontiff” (*Mon.* 3.16.17).”²⁵⁸ The ecclesiology that Olivi presents here could not be farther from the entire thrust of the *Monarchia*. Dante unequivocally posits two powers and two leaders, both deriving their authority from God, while Olivi sees the empire and the papacy as two wings of the one church.

Dante had two other teachers or mentors of note during his time in Florence: Brunetto Latini and Remigio dei Girolami. Brunetto, a layman and a highly respected civil servant for the Florentine government, may have introduced Dante to Boethius, Cicero, and Aristotle. While he was more interested in city government than in the empire or the church, he did address Constantine’s Donation in a chapter of his encyclopedic *Livres du Tresor*. Here he tells the story of Sylvester’s cure of “Gostantin l’emper-eor” and of his gift of “all the imperial dignity that you can see, because prior to that the church had nothing.”²⁵⁹ There is no hint here of the Donation leading in any way to the corruption of the church.

Neither did Remigio contribute significantly to Dante’s thought about the Donation of Constantine. Scholars have speculated that Dante may well have studied under Remigio when he attended “the schools of the religious orders and the disputations held by the philosophers” (*Conv.* 2.12.7), around the time he probably made the acquaintance of Olivi and Ubertino.²⁶⁰ Embedded in his *Contra falsos ecclesie professores* (Against those who teach falsehoods about the church) are thirty-two chapters that focus on the nature and extent of papal authority in what amounts to a compendium of statements made in earlier writings, including the Bible, theologians (Augustine, Dionysius, and Bernard, but not Hugh of St. Victor), canon lawyers, papal declarations, hierocratic theologians, plus Aristotle, civil law, and imperial declarations.²⁶¹ This quasi-encyclopedic treatment flows, no doubt, from the core purpose of *Contra falsos*, which was to provide material for sermons.²⁶² Remigio quotes from the version of the Donation in Gratian’s *Decretum* and mentions Constantine and/or the Donation at least six times. Only one of these could be construed as unfavorable to the gift. Writing well after Manfred’s Manifesto (1265), he quotes the voice from Heaven that supposedly accompanied the Donation (“Hodie infusum est venenum ecclesie Dei” [Today poison is infused in the church of God]) and declares that this shows that Christ wanted the church to be poor in temporal affairs.²⁶³ Just before this he had claimed that prelates should not have primary and direct dominion over temporal

goods because temporalities diminish devotion to and love of God,²⁶⁴ sentiments certainly in line with Dante's. In a later chapter, he deviates significantly from the hierocratic line by saying that even though Christ was the lord of temporal things, that does not mean that he intended for his vicar the pope to have temporal *dominium*.²⁶⁵

For the most part, however, Remigio follows the views of the hierocrats that Dante argues against in the *Monarchia*. He does say that evangelical poverty is the proper model for the church, but he also says that the pope receives his authority directly from God, while the secular princes receive theirs from God through the pope.²⁶⁶ He claims that there is only one body and one head of all Christians and of the church, and that head is the pope.²⁶⁷ At the same time, as Charles Davis has pointed out, Remigio made "every effort to reduce the most celebrated examples of papal intervention in secular affairs to the ground of '*ratio peccati*'" (by reason of sin).²⁶⁸ In the end it must be said that while some of Remigio's ideas are consistent with Dante's, his positions remain confusing and sometimes contradictory, lacking the clarity that Dante consistently offers.²⁶⁹

Finally, among those who were close to Dante, we must consider Cino da Pistoia, civil lawyer and poet. Robert Hollander has pointed out that the two poets were in close contact during three periods of their lives (before 1291, between 1304 and 1306, and possibly between 1310 and 1313), that they became close friends, that they knew each other's poems well, that Dante included Cino in the narrowly restricted "school" of the *dolce stil nuovo* (*Purg.* 24.57), and that Cino recognized Dante's superior poetic skills.²⁷⁰ Of course Cino's legal skills were clearly superior to Dante's. To put Cino's position on the Donation in the proper context, we must review how popes and theologians used the Donation over the preceding century or so to consider how the Donation was treated during and after the dispute between Henry VII and Clement V.

Earlier reformers including Arnold of Brescia (d. 1155)²⁷¹ and Peter Waldo (d. 1218)²⁷² had cited the Donation of Constantine as the beginning of the Church's decline and insisted that prelates and clerics should follow the poverty of Christ. Both had been condemned for heresy. In Dante's own time Fra Dolcino reprised these assertions,²⁷³ but he could hardly have influenced the poet, who has Mohammed ask Dante to warn Dolcino that Dolcino will join him among the schismatics in Hell unless he changes his ways (*Inf.* 28:55–60).

Dante's own contribution was to incorporate the idea that the church's corruption began with Constantine's Donation (a view not found among the Franciscans) into the Joachite-influenced Franciscan presentation of the ages of church history. As we have seen, he declares that the decline of the church started with Sylvester's acceptance of Constantine's purported gift, a point that he shares with certain heretics but not with Joachim, Bonaventure, Olivi, or Ubertino.

The Thirteenth Century

During the thirteenth century the Donation of Constantine once again became an issue in the ongoing contest between the papacy and the empire.²⁷⁴ Prior to that, Bernard of Clairvaux, who received the honor of serving as Dante's third and final guide in the *Commedia*, alluded to Constantine (but not to the Donation) only once in his work.²⁷⁵ In his *De consideratione*, addressed to Eugenius III, he urged the new pope not to process "adorned with either jewels or silks, covered with gold" because "in this finery, you are the successor not of Peter but of Constantine."²⁷⁶ Using language similar to Dante's in *Monarchia* 2.10.2, St. Bernard wrote of the *facultates ecclesiarum* (resources of the church), saying that they are the patrimony of the poor.²⁷⁷ But St. Bernard in no way denied the church's right to own property. He did believe that the proper form of the church was that it should be apostolic and poor,²⁷⁸ and that would have pleased Dante, who was certainly acquainted with this work.²⁷⁹ Yet *De consideratione* was not the only and not even the most significant place where Dante encountered the idea of a poor church.

More important than St. Bernard were the declarations of strong popes of the thirteenth century and their supporters. When Innocent III referred to Constantine in a sermon prepared for the feast of St. Sylvester, he repeated key parts of the Donation from Gratian and called Sylvester "not only a great priest, but the greatest, sublime with pontifical and regal power, truly the vicar of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords [1 Timothy 6:15; Apoc. 19:16], a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech [Psalm 110:4]."²⁸⁰ According to Kenneth Pennington, the model of Melchisedech was Innocent's "most dramatic argument for papal monarchy, far more important to him than the Donation of Constantine."²⁸¹ Despite the height of this claim, in practice Innocent III

appears to have limited his intervention in temporal affairs to certain causes (*causaliter*): for reason of sin (*ratione peccati*), for the vacancy of the empire (*vacante imperio*), and for heresy.²⁸² His most famous and important statement about what has been called the indirect power of the papacy in temporal affairs was made in a letter to William VIII, Lord of Montpellier, entitled *Per venerabilem* (1202), but since it dealt with a matter regarding the succession of illegitimate children in France and had nothing to do with the empire, Innocent had no reason to mention the Donation of Constantine.²⁸³ Walter Ullmann wrote that “Innocent III was too cautious and shrewd to base his claim upon this slender foundation [i.e., the Donation].”²⁸⁴

According to Brian Tierney, it was Gregory IX who renewed papal focus on the Donation in a letter to the emperor Frederick II in which he stated that “Constantine . . . established not only in the City of Rome but in the whole Roman Empire—that as the vicar of the Prince of the Apostles governed the empire of priesthood and of souls in the whole world so he [i.e., the pope] should also reign over things and bodies throughout the whole world.”²⁸⁵ Gregory IX so overstated the content of the Donation as to make it a weak argument. His successor, Innocent IV, decided to come up with a new interpretation of the ancient gift. In the encyclical letter *Eger cui lenia* (ca. 1246) defending his deposition of Frederick II, he “turned the Donation on its head” by stating that it was in fact not a gift but a restitution of property that Christ had given to Peter, so it had been illegally held by the empire all along.²⁸⁶

Later popes rarely mention the Donation or Constantine. Boniface VIII’s principal conflict was not with an emperor but with Philip IV of France, so the pope had no reason to use the Donation to assert claims against the king. In fact the Donation is not mentioned in Boniface’s three most famous bulls written to claim his authority over Philip: *Clericis laicos* (August 18, 1295), *Asculia fili* (December 6, 1301), and *Unam sanctam* (November 18, 1302), regarded as the most extreme position of papal power in the Middle Ages.²⁸⁷ Similarly, in a letter to the German electors (May 13, 1300) asserting his right to claim imperial rights in Tuscany, Boniface skipped right over the traditional mention of the Donation and took papal credit for translating the empire to the Germans by crowning Charlemagne. A papal consistory was held on June 24, 1302, with French ambassadors in attendance, in which both Cardinal Matthew of Acquasparta and Boniface VIII spoke in strong terms about papal power

in temporal affairs, but neither of them said anything about Sylvester, Constantine, or the Donation.²⁸⁸ It is possible, as we have seen, that Boniface's strongest reliance on the Donation of Constantine was manifest in the Lateran frescoes, completed in 1300.

If Boniface avoided the Donation in his bulls and letters, he failed to prevent writers on different sides of the issue from bringing it back into the conversation. Ptolemy of Lucca used the Donation to support his "early and influential exposition of high papalist views" in the *Determinatio compendiosa de iurisdictione imperii* (Summary judgment on imperial jurisdiction), probably written around 1300, repeating the concept that it was not a gift but a restitution.²⁸⁹ When the struggle between Boniface VIII and Philip IV came to a head, conflicting opinions were expressed on all sides. However, since this conflict was between the papacy and the kingdom of France, and since the empire was at a low ebb at the time, the imperial side was not heavily involved.

Perhaps the most original contribution to ideas about the Donation during this period was made by the French Dominican theologian John of Paris in his treatise *De potestate regia et papali* (On royal and papal power), written in 1302–3 in support of the Philip IV.²⁹⁰ In Chapter 21, "On the Donation of Constantine and What the Pope Can Do as a Consequence of It," John denied the validity of the gift, but he attacked it from a point of view fundamentally different from Dante's. His eagerness to exempt the kingdom of France from papal control led John effectively to deny the universality of the empire and to claim that France was never part of it.²⁹¹ He referred to the version of the story told by Vincent of Beauvais in which Constantine awarded Sylvester only "one province, namely Italy, along with certain other territories, not including France."²⁹² He then cited the four arguments against the Donation in Accursius's *Glossa ordinaria ad authenticum* and added (inaccurately) that the *Life of Pope St. Sylvester* proved that the gift was displeasing to God because angelic voices were heard to say "This day poison has been spread abroad in the church."²⁹³ Even if we grant the validity of the Donation and its applicability to the whole empire, John continues, the document gave the pope no power over the king of France because the Franks were never conquered by the Romans; and even if the Franks had been subject to the empire, the Donation gave the pope no power over the French king because he was the pope, not the emperor.²⁹⁴ Furthermore, in another

argument antithetical to Dante's view, he claimed that the Romans achieved dominance by force.

Elsewhere in his treatise, John of Paris explicitly allows the church to own temporal property, but only as a community. He explains that the pope and other ecclesiastics have *dominium* or *proprietaem* over properties, but that these rights have been given to communities rather than individuals. The pope, as head of the church, is the "general steward" (*universalis dispensator*) of all ecclesiastical goods whether spiritual or temporal. He is not indeed lord of them, for only the community of the universal church is the mistress and proprietress of all goods generally."²⁹⁵

It is not likely that Dante was familiar with this treatise.²⁹⁶ If he read it, this portion of John's treatise might have reinforced his concept of the church as a guardian of property, but nowhere does John of Paris use the critical word *patrocinium* to describe the Donation, and nowhere does he absolutely deny the church the right to ownership of property. John collected a list of 42 arguments from those who say that the pope has jurisdiction over all temporal affairs, and then he proceeds to answer these arguments one by one.²⁹⁷ All in all, John of Paris addresses the issue of papal versus royal authority with more detail and care than anyone else, and the comparisons between his work and the *Monarchia* are instructive. But a wide gulf divides him from Dante on the critical issues of the universality of imperial authority, the prohibition of church ownership of property, and the apostolic life as the proper form of the church. In fact, he says that one of the six powers that Christ gave to the pope and the apostles was "the power to receive what is necessary to maintain a suitable standard of living from those to whom they minister spiritually,"²⁹⁸ and he accuses the Waldensians of error in their claim that the status of the pope and the prelates as successors to the apostles was incompatible with temporal *dominium* and earthly riches.²⁹⁹

Though a theologian, John of Paris reflected the ideas of the French jurists of the second half of the thirteenth century. The school of the glossators had reached its height with Accursius's *Glossa ordinaria* in the mid-thirteenth century. Jacques de Revigny, Pierre de Belleperche, and other jurists at the University of Orléans developed a new way of studying the civil law by combining scholastic dialectics with jurisprudential analysis. The proponents of this new French school became known as the commentators, and they focused in more detail on the practical application of the law to contemporary situations. The French commentators

had an enormous influence on the University of Bologna.³⁰⁰ Here we find the link to Cino da Pistoia. It is important to note that Cino was not an ordinary law professor—he was the “initial pillar” of the Italian school of Commentators.³⁰¹

Cino and Dante had previously built a close relationship based on mutual respect for each other's poems. During a later period they came together in support of the empire. Domenico Maffei sees Cino's statements regarding the Donation of Constantine as a particularly important part of his early legal thought, illustrating the influence of the French school.³⁰² In his monumental *Lectura super Codice*, Cino expressed the opinion that the commonwealth should be governed by one authority, who can be called “mundi dominus,” and asserted that his rule extends over all the earth, day and night.³⁰³ Following Pierre de Belleperche, Cino therefore rejected the validity of the Donation of Constantine. He made a distinction between the emperor's authority over things belonging to his own personal patrimony (*beni patrimoniali*) as against things that are in public use as part of the imperial fisc, such as theaters and roads.³⁰⁴ Cino concluded that the emperor was not capable of alienating, giving away, or prescribing things in public use, including, most importantly, the jurisdiction of the empire and the *signa subiunctionis*, the signs or markers of imperial authority integral to the imperial office. More importantly, Cino says that the popes could not ascribe the *signa subiunctionis* to themselves—an echo of Dante's view that Sylvester took (*prese*) the Donation from Constantine.³⁰⁵ The Donation must therefore be considered a patrimonial emolument of those things that can be legitimately alienated.³⁰⁶ And since that which can be alienated can be revoked, the Donation is a revocable grant, not a transfer of *dominium* over inalienable imperial things. Cino here differs from Dante by implying that the emperor could give the church some of his own private buildings or land;³⁰⁷ he does not make Dante's argument that the church is indisposed to receive temporal goods. But Cino and Dante both agree that the emperor is not capable of giving away any of the dignities, authorities, or powers of the empire.

While Dante did not go into the distinction between the alienability and inalienability of the things belonging to the emperor, while Cino did not use the key word *patrocinium*, and while Cino did not employ the argument of the apostolic form of the church, their expressed positions on the Donation of Constantine shared important elements. As a fellow supporter of the empire, Cino must have welcomed the arrival of the

Henry VII with enthusiasm at least somewhat equivalent to Dante's jubilation in the letter he wrote "To the Princes and Peoples of Italy" in 1310 (*Ep.* 5).³⁰⁸ Surely they were in contact during these years. It is possible that they were together at Henry VII's coronation as king of the Lombards in Milan.³⁰⁹

The 1312–14 Controversy

When Henry VII descended into Italy, he provoked a fierce struggle with Clement V and Robert of Anjou.³¹⁰ On the assassination of Albert of Austria in 1308, the German electors made the unlikely choice of Henry, Count of Luxembourg, and crowned him king of the Romans at Aachen on January 6, 1309. Because of his weak standing in Germany, Henry decided to secure additional prestige by traveling to Rome to receive the imperial crown.³¹¹ Clement V approved of the emperor-elect's Italian campaign, promised to place the imperial crown on the emperor's head with his own hands in St. Peter's in Rome, and even instructed all good Christians to pay him the proper respect,³¹² but he hedged his bet by appointing his vassal, King Robert of Naples, as papal vicar in the Romagna in August 1310.³¹³ Despite this appointment, Henry signed the Promise of Lausanne on October 11, 1310,³¹⁴ on his way across the Mt. Cenis pass to Italy to be crowned king of the Lombards in Milan and Holy Roman emperor in Rome. But trouble broke out between Henry and Robert, and the pope was eventually forced to make a choice.³¹⁵ After some nasty conflicts with rebellious cities on the Lombard plain, Henry decided to press on to Rome to receive his crown.

Meanwhile, in Avignon, Clement V decided to allow Robert's troops to impede Henry's entrance into Rome—an act that Dante describes as deceit (*inganno*).³¹⁶ As a result, when Henry arrived in Rome he was opposed by Robert's troops, who held Trastevere and the Castel San Angelo. Unable to reach St. Peter's, Henry settled for a coronation ceremony in the Lateran on June 29, 1312. Ten days before the coronation Clement V wrote a letter proclaiming a truce between Henry and Robert and commanding Henry not to oppose the very troops who were blocking his coronation.³¹⁷ Through the cardinals the pope soon ordered Henry to get out of the city of Rome, which, he said, belonged to the papacy and not to the empire.³¹⁸ Henry left for Tivoli a few days after the coronation and lingered there for a couple of months before moving to Arezzo.

Once there he posted a proclamation on the doors of the cathedral accusing Robert of the crime of treason against the empire.³¹⁹ He also started negotiations with Frederick III, king of Trinacia (Sicily), against the pope's wishes.³²⁰ By now Henry had contracted malaria. After a half-hearted effort to take Florence in December of 1312, Henry took up residence in Pisa for about eight months, during which he issued the Constitutions of Pisa and condemned Robert to beheading and the loss of his lands. In August of the next year he started for Rome with a reconstituted army. Barred by the Guelfs from entering Siena, Henry moved south to Buonconvento, where the malaria finally overtook him on August 24, 1313. Following the emperor's death, Clement V issued two bulls very critical of Henry VII's actions in Italy, *Romani principes* and *Pastoralis cura* (March 14, 1314).

In the end the contest between Clement V, Robert of Naples, and Henry VII may have generated more parchment than blood. The struggle was accompanied from beginning to end by a flurry of documents—edicts, constitutions, proclamations, condemnations, papal bulls, treatises, and legal opinions on both sides. These documents made important contributions to the development of civil law.³²¹ Many of them address the Donation of Constantine.³²² Dante contributed the three letters described as “political” to the fracas, all written before Henry's coronation in Rome: first, a letter “To the Princes and Peoples of Italy,” urging them to welcome Henry with open arms (September or October 1310); second, a letter “To the Florentines,” urging them to give up their rebellion against the future emperor (March 31, 1311); and third, a letter “To the Emperor Henry VII,” pleading with him to give up his struggles with the cities in Lombardy and to attack Florence, the root of the problem (April 17, 1311).³²³ We know from the letters that Dante was at the castle of Poppi at least until April 17, 1311. He may have traveled to Milan to welcome Henry VII and to witness his coronation as king of the Lombards. He does not mention the Donation of Constantine in any of these letters, all of which were written before the pamphlet war began.

The Donation of Constantine seems to grow in prominence as it is brought into the arguments on both sides. How Dante might have seen any of these documents is a matter for speculation. Through the Malaspina family, Cino da Pistoia, or Cangrande della Scala, he may have had some access to the imperial court, or he may at least have received copies of documents distributed to Henry's supporters in Italy. His son Pietro

may have also studied law in Bologna during these years, and in any case, Bologna, the epicenter of legal studies in Italy, was easily accessible both from the Casentino and from Verona, where Dante resided around this time.³²⁴

Boniface VIII may not have cared much for the Donation, but Clement V was eager to have Henry promise to reconfirm in very strong terms the Donation and other privileges given to the church. In the Promise of Lausanne (October 11, 1310) Henry obligated himself in every way possible to maintain and conserve all of the status, preeminence, dignities, and privileges granted to the Roman church and the Roman pontiff by Constantine, Charlemagne, Henry, Otto IV, Frederick II, and Rudolph, including the lands and provinces of the Roman church wherever they are with all the cities, lands, and boundaries with their laws and jurisdictions intact. The list included the march of Ancona, the exarchate of Ravenna, the Pentapolis, Bologna, Perugia, Spoleto, Massa Trabaria, the patrimony of St. Peter in Tuscany, Todi, Narni, Civitavecchia, Rieti, the Campagna, and others. Beyond this, Henry pledged to recognize that the “law and possession and property rights” of these cities and lands belonged wholly to the Roman church and that he would make no claim for them. He further promised never to occupy any of these places and to serve as advocate and defender of the Holy Roman church against anyone who might encroach on its territories.³²⁵

By March of 1311, now that Henry and his army were in Lombardy, it had become clear to all that Henry was serious about restoring imperial rights in Italy. Clement’s support of Henry began to wane as Henry’s determination and his sense of what it meant to be emperor increased. It became clear that he interpreted the oaths he had made to the pope in a different way. Immediately after he was crowned Holy Roman emperor on June 29, 1312, Henry issued an encyclical letter to the princes of Europe declaring that the emperor’s role was to keep men from sinning, that Rome was the proper seat of both empire and papacy, that as emperor he was king of kings and lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15; Apoc. 19:16),³²⁶ and that everything was subject to him. In this letter he managed to avoid mentioning the Donation of Constantine.³²⁷ In another document written on the same day against heretics and sacrilegious people, he mentioned Constantine but not the Donation, saying only that his predecessor had defended and supported the Roman church.³²⁸ A week later he wrote the pope to reassure him by confirming the Promise of Lausanne, neglecting

again to mention the Donation.³²⁹ Nor did Henry refer to the Donation or Constantine in his response to the cardinals' order to quit Rome. Here he did not object to Clement's territorial claims or even dispute the pope's assertion that he could be in Rome only with special permission; instead, he agreed to free the Roman prisoners and restore the houses and palaces he had seized. He made the excuse that he had stayed in Rome only to pacify the city according to the pope's wishes. If Clement was deceitful, Henry was equally disingenuous.³³⁰

So much for the official documents. The pamphlet war now began in earnest. The publicists, theologians, and lawyers on both sides addressed many issues other than the Donation, including especially whether Henry could legitimately accuse Robert of Naples of *lèse majesté*, summon him to court, and condemn him in absentia.³³¹ Few of these documents are specifically dated, but almost all of them were written after Henry's coronation or after his condemnation of Robert and before his death.

Cino da Pistoia's comments in the *Lectura super Codice* about the Donation can be regarded as a contribution to of this war of words, since this commentary on the civil law was finished between 1312 and 1314.³³² It was probably the strongest argument on the imperial side. Two other important imperial documents exist.³³³ A Pavian jurist, Johannes Branchazolus, weighed in on November 14, 1312, with a treatise arguing that both powers were divine in origin, the emperor was *dominus mundi* and lord of all temporal things, all nations were under him, his authority was above the apostolic authority, and the imperial coronation by the pope added nothing but was simply a recognition of a fact. Branchazolus does not mention Constantine or the Donation, but he does say that "the emperor was generally called the head of the church, as we read in the legend of the blessed Sylvester."³³⁴ Dante would not have agreed with an expression of imperial power pushed to such an extreme.

The second important imperial document (not dated) was a product of the Sicilian court of Frederick of Trinacria.³³⁵ The author, who may have been the Sicilian jurist Giovanni de Calvaruso,³³⁶ focuses primarily on the legality of the truce with Robert imposed by the pope, but he also calls the emperor *dominus mundi*, declares that nothing is greater than the empire in temporal things, and says that spiritual things do not include temporal things.³³⁷ He denies the validity of Constantine's Donation by referring to the *Authenticum*, saying that the pope could in no way prevent the emperor from being in Rome, because the Roman emperor derived

his name from that city, which therefore must be his.³³⁸ Furthermore, Sicily belongs to the empire; it cannot belong to the church because from apostolic times the Lord charged the *navicula* (small boat) of the church with the mission of going throughout the world and preaching the gospel and admonished the apostles not to be bogged down by gold and silver. If Dante knew this juridical treatise, it may have stimulated his thinking. This last point at least foreshadows the critical argument regarding the poverty of the church that Dante uses in *Monarchia* 3.10 against the validity of the Donation of Constantine,³³⁹ and the word *navicula* offers a closer resonance to Dante's use of *navicella* than the almost universally accepted gloss that points to the phrase *Hodie venenum diffusum est in ecclesia sancta Dei* (Today poison is diffused into the Holy Church of God).

The treatises on the papal side were far stronger. Three documents edited by Jacob Schwalm address the papal concerns: (1) a summary of the oaths Henry had taken, including his confirmation of the Donation, followed by a list of 10 questions regarding the controversy; (2) a juridical analysis of the 10 questions; and (3) a theological explication of the 10 questions.³⁴⁰ The juridical analysis simply states that the pope can order the emperor out of Rome because it has been in his *dominium* since the Donation of Constantine, and for the same reason the emperor cannot enter the kingdom of Naples by force and without papal permission.³⁴¹ Here also the papalists bring into full view a principle implied by the pope in the act of requiring Henry to quit Rome: that the authority of the emperor has geographical boundaries, which do not include the kingdom of Naples³⁴² or the territory awarded to the pope by the Donation. This was a principle diametrically opposed to Henry VII's and Dante's conceptions of the universal authority and *dominium* of the emperor. Similar arguments were made in the *Tractatus de Jurisdictione Ecclesie super Regnum Apuliae et Siciliae* (*Treatise on the Church's Jurisdiction over the Kingdom of Apulia and Sicily*).³⁴³

It should be noted, however, that Henry VII in practice and even in theory accepted limits on his authority that Dante would not have countenanced. Unlike Dante, the emperor implicitly recognized that the empire had geographical limits. Commenting on these differences, Charles Davis wrote that Dante's *Epistle* 7 contains "a vigorous exposition of his [i.e., Henry VII's] universal authority, as if Henry needed to be reminded of his own power," and that "Dante writes to Henry with the

air of one who is guilty of serious ignorance, not realizing the full extent of his authority.”³⁴⁴

By far the most extreme statements in the papal documents and presumably the most annoying to Dante are contained in a treatise purporting to address Henry VII's sentence against Robert of Naples.³⁴⁵ The author invalidates the condemnation by undermining the emperor's authority. In doing so he takes a completely different tack on the Donation of Constantine. While repeating that Constantine did in fact make a *donationem legitimam et expressam* (legitimate and clear donation) of the city of Rome and other provinces, he says that with this act the *res publica* (commonwealth) of Rome either ceased to exist or now existed *apud summum Romanum pontificem* (in the highest Roman pontiff) because Rome and these provinces had been transferred to the pope in perpetuity.³⁴⁶ Human things change, the writer says, including the status of dignities and authorities. At one time the emperor was *dominus quasi omnium* (lord of almost all), whence he called himself *dominus mundi*. But today there are many kings princes, marquises, counts, barons, and communes throughout the world that possess their own dignities; once the emperor was over all the kings and nations, but now it is widely recognized that the kings of France, Sicily, Spain, Aragon, England, Portugal, Armenia, Hungary, and Cyprus are not subject to him and do not obey him.³⁴⁷ Furthermore, Rome acquired its empire by violence and imposed its laws on subject nations, a situation that could not last forever. Then this writer reaches a crescendo. It is clear, he says, that to talk in these modern times about the power and authority of the emperor is in a way “to misstate things, because the emperor is said to have everything but in fact he possesses nothing, and he is called the emperor of the Roman people, but he has no dominion, *imperium*, power, or jurisdiction over the Romans ever since the *abdicatio* and donation of Constantine, and after his coronation it was legitimate that he was not allowed to stay even one day in the city. Without doubt the dominion (*dominium*) of the emperor has been aborted, his authority diminished, his power restricted, and his imperium and jurisdiction mutilated.”³⁴⁸

Not long after Henry VII's death, Clement attacked the emperor's memory with the bull *Romani principes* (March 14, 1314) and accused him of violating his oaths, neglecting to confirm the papacy's ownership (*proprietatem*) of Rome and other lands and provinces and failing to honor the privileges granted by Constantine and his successors.³⁴⁹ In the bull

Pastoralis cura, issued on the same day, Clement rendered Henry's sentence of Robert invalid, declared that the emperor had no jurisdiction outside the boundaries of the empire, including Sicily, asserted papal authority *vacante imperio* (when the imperial office is vacant), and claimed superiority over the empire, which was given to Peter by Christ.³⁵⁰ If Dante read Clement's two bulls, they would certainly have made him angry.

It is indeed difficult to read these documents and not speculate about the thoughts and feelings Dante might have had upon reviewing them. Nicola Zingarelli long ago suggested that Dante wrote the *Monarchia* to support Cangrande when John XXII rescinded his title of imperial vicar with the bull *Si fratrum* (March 31, 1317).³⁵¹ Piero Giorgio Ricci, Michele Maccarrone, Prue Shaw, Richard Kay, Anthony Cassell, Giorgio Padoan, Francesco Furlan, Enrico Fenzi, and others have agreed with him, partly because Dante's reference in *Monarchia* 1.12.6 to *Paradiso* 5.19–22 would date the prose work much later.³⁵² But Charles Davis pointed out that the core argument of John's bull is that the pope is in charge of the empire when the imperial seat is vacant (*vacante imperis*) and that Dante does not address this issue in the *Monarchia*.³⁵³ Furthermore, John XXII did not even mention the Donation in *Si fratrum*. If the *Monarchia* were written against this bull, why would Dante have made his argument against the Donation the cornerstone of his treatise?

The prominent place of the Donation of Constantine in the *Monarchia* and in the 1312–14 controversy confirms Davis's arguments and strongly suggests an earlier date for the treatise. What Dante says about the Donation makes it reasonable to believe that he wrote the *Monarchia* to shore up the weak arguments on the imperial side and possibly even to stiffen Henry VII's resolve to oppose these encroachments on imperial authority. However, such a theory depends on accepting both Dante's placement of Clement V with the simoniac popes in *Inferno* 19.79–87 and his reference to *Paradiso* 5 in the *Monarchia* as later interpolations. This theory could also suggest that the reference in that canto to the Donation ("Ahi, Costantin, di quanto mal fu madre, / non la tua conversion, ma quella dote / che da te prese il primo ricco padre!" [*Inf.* 19.115–17]) might also have been a later addition.

As for Cino da Pistoia, from Dante's point of view, he was a turncoat. Although he was a strong supporter of the empire in 1312–14, he eventually drifted into the Guelph / Angevin camp. In 1319 he participated in a

group called by the inquisitor of Florence for the purpose trying a Franciscan monk as a heretic, and he worked for the papacy a year later in prosecuting some Ghibellines in the Marches.³⁵⁴ His *Lectura super Digesto Vetere*, published about a decade later, approves the papacy's use of temporal power, says that the empire comes not from God but from the people, and claims that the church is the greater of the two powers.³⁵⁵ What brought about Cino's about-face we do not know. Domenico Maffei explains the change as a natural reaction to Ludwig of Bavaria's Germanic barbarism rather than a shameless act of opportunism or a religious conversion.³⁵⁶ Cino received his doctorate in law from the University of Bologna in 1314,³⁵⁷ not long after Henry VII's death. Perhaps he became one of the greedy lawyers toward whom Dante developed such an aversion. Whatever its cause, Cino's radical change clearly started as early as the late 1310s, and his adoption of the hierocratic point of view lends credence to Robert Hollander's hypothesis that Dante left Cino out of the *Commedia* because they had parted ways on fundamental beliefs regarding the relationship between the church and the empire.³⁵⁸ Cino does not mention the *Monarchia*, so we have no way of knowing whether he read it; but Dante must have been very bitterly disappointed that the power of his imperial vision, as expressed both in the *Monarchia* and in the *Commedia*, failed to reach the heart and convince the mind of his once-dear friend.

Conclusion

The narrative of the *Monarchia* culminates in Book 3, Chapter 10, where Dante addresses the Donation of Constantine. Here Dante presents an argument from reason to support the independence of imperial, temporal authority from the church. In this same chapter he delivers the most effective attack on the excesses of papal claims to power in the temporal sphere. Both arguments are based on the ownership of property, for it is from property that all other forms of individual and state authority flow: legal rights, wealth, political interests, taxes, coinage, social control, coercion, war, and eventually national sovereignty. In Chapter 16 Dante makes it clear that he is not making a distinction between secular and sacred authority, for the function of the emperor is a sacred one: he is to serve as the Augustinian bridle to cupidity and also to establish the peace

and justice in the world that will make it possible for Christians to fulfill their potential in an Aristotelian sense and achieve blessedness in this life as well as salvation in the next. Dante's arguments against the Donation of Constantine thus form the critical fulcrum of the *Monarchia*, and this point of view echoes throughout the *Commedia*.

At the very center of the sacred poem Dante the pilgrim states the obvious to Marco Lombardo:

Lo mondo è ben così tutto deserto
d'ogne virtute, come tu mi sone,
e di malizia gravido e coverto.
Purg. 16.58–50

The pilgrim asks how this has happened. "Frate, / lo mondo è cieco," Marco replies (*Purg.* 16.65–66). He then explains the doctrine of free will, concluding that laws exist to guide men to the true city (*Purg.* 16.94–96). But the pastor (the pope) ignores them. So "la mala condotta / è la cagion che 'l mondo a fatto reo" (*Purg.* 16.103–4). Without at this point explicitly naming the Donation, Marco Lombardo goes on explain how the papal and imperial powers, both rooted in Rome, have become confused:

Soleva Roma, che 'l buon mondo feo,
due soli aver, che l'una e l'altra strada
facean vedere, e del mondo e di Deo.
L'un l'altro ha spento: ed è giunta la spada
col pastorale, e l'un con l'altro insieme
per viva forza mal convien che vada;
però che, giunti, l'un l'altro non teme.
Purg. 16.106–12

What is to be done about this state of affairs? What will it take for the world to be set once again on the right track? How can the church be rid of its corrupting wealth and the pernicious effects of Constantine's Donation? Dante comes forth with a direct answer in the *Monarchia*. Speaking of the church's riches, he emphatically urges: "*Redeant unde venerunt*"—Let them return whence they came (*Mon.* 3.10.3). Dante here declares that the wealth of the church should be returned to the empire, in the sense that the emperor's superior dominion should once again be acknowledged over the patrimony which he has entrusted to the ecclesiastical hierarchy as a protectorate. The emperor, in other words, must

reassert his universal jurisdiction over the whole world, including Rome. At the same time the church must recognize its subordination to imperial authority as far as temporal goods and political power are concerned. Only then can the sword be separated from the crook, and only then can the two suns properly illuminate the world so that men may attain their dual goals of happiness in this life and eternal blessedness in the life beyond (*Mon.* 3.16.7–10). The return to a proper understanding of the Donation will be an initial and substantial step toward the reform both of the church and of secular society. As the nexus between the secular and religious aspects of Dante's reform thought, therefore, the Donation of Constantine occupies a special place in ushering the forthcoming age of political and ecclesiastical reform.

Dante's unique contribution to the understanding of the Donation was a three-part concept of denying the church's right to own property, holding up the life of Christ and the apostles as the model for the contemporary church, and pointing to the role of the emperor as the proper holder of all *dominium*, including church property, and as the prime agent for the reform of the church.

Whenever it was that Dante wrote the *Monarchia* and *Paradiso*, he soared above all of his contemporaries by countering the arguments of popes and hierocrats, by adopting the judgments of the civil lawyers against the diminution of the empire, and by combining these concepts with the proper apostolic and poor form of the church, drawn from Franciscan and earlier traditions. This was a position far more radical than has been generally accepted by modern scholars, but one clearly understood by Dante's subsequent antagonists. Guido Vernani da Rimini wrote a treatise in 1327 against the "heresy" of the *Monarchia*;³⁵⁹ Cardinal Bertrand del Poggetto, effective lord of Bologna, committed the *Monarchia* and very nearly Dante's bones to the flames in 1397;³⁶⁰ and in 1323 John XXII promulgated the bull *Cum inter nonnullos*, declaring that it was heresy to say that Christ and the apostles lived in poverty.³⁶¹

One has only to read R. W. Southern's *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* to see how hopelessly unrealistic was Dante's idea that the church should be divested of all temporal power and wealth.³⁶² The wealth and temporal power of the church had long and deep roots in history, tradition, and canon law. We can agree with Lino Pertile that Dante's vision looked backward rather than forward,³⁶³ that it was a vision that was deeply conservative in Dante's desire to roll the medieval world

back to a halcyon time of Augustus and Christ. And we can agree that Dante's vision was patently unfeasible, not even slightly realistic, especially with regard to reclaiming church property. But we cannot soften his message without doing violence to Dante, to his own times, and to our understanding of the critical years during which he lived. Be that as it may, it is just possible that a dose of humility, evidence of spirituality, and a public life of reasonable austerity on the part of popes and prelates might have gone a long way to assuage the concerns that Dante, among many, had about ecclesiastical corruption. But that was not to be. The papacy instead became increasingly protective of its possessions, its temporal power, and its demand for money.

In the end, it was not simply the three parts of his concept of church property and the Donation of Constantine that made Dante's position different. The vigor of his argument in the *Monarchia* and the magnificence of his poetic expression in the *Commedia* ensured that Dante's voice would be heard by contemporaries and for centuries to come. This was a voice so powerful and a program so radical that generations of scholars have devoted barrels of ink to explaining Dante's position away, to softening his message. But there is no softness in Dante's message. There is no equivocation in his voice. He meant what he wrote: the church should own no property, it should follow the poverty of Christ and the apostles, and an emperor will come to make this happen.

However, all of this happens here on this earth. The *scriba Dei* has St. Peter remind us that all of our temporal concerns in the end play out in a space that in comparison with eternity is a tiny "patch of earth" (*Par.* 27.86; *Mon.* 3.16.11).³⁶⁴ Important as earthly beatitude is, eternal salvation ranks infinitely higher. Dante's own salvation comes through grace, mediated first by a pagan man and then by a lay Christian woman, and only at the very end by a monk of the church. Serving allegorically as everyman, Dante teaches that men are not passive subjects of empire or papacy but both secular and sacred creatures who play a vital role in their own destiny, both here and beyond.

The breach between persons of faith and reason like Dante and a church hierarchy increasingly focused on temporal power and wealth was growing wider and wider in the early years of the fourteenth century. Boniface VIII added two crowns to the papal tiara, for a total of three, mimicking the emperor's silver, iron, and gold crowns. He also bedecked it with precious jewels, including a large ruby at the top.

Moved to Avignon, the popes' triple crowns acquired fleurs-de-lis pressed into the gold, reflecting the domination of France. It came to be called "the Tiara of St. Sylvester," boldly connecting papal power to the Donation of Constantine.³⁶⁵

Coral Gables, Florida

Appendix

Dante's Arguments against the Donation: *Monarchia* 3.10

Dante opens chapter 10 of the third book of the *Monarchia* with a brief summary of the Donation of Constantine. "Some people," he says, "maintain that the emperor Constantine, cured of leprosy by the intercession of Sylvester who was then supreme Pontiff, made a gift to the church of the seat of empire (i.e., Rome), along with many other imperial privileges. From this they argue that since that time no one can take on those imperial privileges unless he receives them from the church, to whom (they say) they belong; and it would indeed follow from this that the one authority was dependent on the other, as they claim" (*Mon.* 3.10.1–2).

Dante reminds the reader that he has just "stated and refuted those arguments which appeared to be based on the word of God." That said, "it now remains to state and refute those [arguments] which are based on human actions and human reason" (*Mon.* 3.10.3). The first of these arguments is the overall topic of Chapter 10. This argument is followed by five more specific arguments that are based on the nature of the empire. The final argument is based both on the nature of the empire and on the proper form or nature of the church.

These seven arguments in *Monarchia* 3.10 are parsed below, syllogism by syllogism, to clarify the most important statements that Dante made regarding the Donation of Constantine. The Latin text is from Prue Shaw's edition. The English translation is also based on Shaw's translation, but I have added, changed, left out some words, and taken liberties with punctuation, capitalization, parentheses, and occasional word order. The resulting translations can be taken as mine, with gratitude to Shaw's English text. Dante's subordinate points and comments are in braces.

THE OVERALL ARGUMENT AGAINST WHICH DANTE WILL ARGUE (*Mon.* 3.10.3–4):

1. *That no one can hold [temporal authority] legitimately unless granted it by the Church [false].*

Major premiss:

"Those things which belong to the church can only be held legitimately by someone to whom the church has granted them"

{and this we concede};

“Ea que sunt Ecclesie nemo de iure habere potest nisi ab Ecclesia”
{et hoc conceditur};

Minor premiss:

[Some people say that] “Roman sovereign authority belongs to the church;”³⁶⁶

“Romanum regimen est Ecclesie;”

Conclusion:

Therefore no one can hold it [i.e., sovereign authority] legitimately unless granted it by the church

{and they prove the minor premiss with reference to what was touched on earlier about Constantine}.

“Ergo ipsum nemo habere potest de iure nisi ab Ecclesia”

{et minorum probant per ea que de Constantino superius tracta sunt}.

Dante’s comment on the false syllogism:

{It is this minor premiss which I therefore deny, and when they “prove” it I say their “proof” proves nothing, because Constantine was not in a position to give away the privileges of empire, nor was the church in a position accept them.}

{Hanc ergo minorem interimo et, cum probant, dico quod sua probatio nulla est, quia Constantinus alienare non poterat Imperii dignitatem, nec Ecclesia recipere.}

FIRST ARGUMENT FROM REASON (*Mon.* 3.10.5–6):

2. That the emperor cannot split up the empire.

Major premiss:

Nobody has the right to do things via an office he holds which are in conflict with that office

{otherwise one and the same thing would oppose itself in its own nature, which is impossible};

Nemini licet ea facere per officium sibi deputatum que sunt contra illud officium

{quia sic idem, in quantum idem, esset contrarium sibi ipsi: quod est impossibile};

Minor premiss:

But to split up the empire is in conflict with the office bestowed on the emperor

{since his task is to hold mankind in obedience to a single will [its commands and its prohibitions], as can easily be seen from the first book of this treatise};

Sed contra offitium deputatum Imperatori est scindere Imperium;

{cum offitium eius sit humanum genus uni velle et uni nolle tenere subiectum, ut in primo huius de facili videre potest};

Conclusion:

Therefore the emperor is not allowed to split up the empire.

Ergo scindere Imperium Imperatori non licet.

Dante's comment on the syllogism:

{Thus if certain privileges had been taken away from the empire by Constantine, as they maintain, and had passed into the control of the church, that seamless garment would have been torn which even those who pierced Christ the true God with their lance dared not to divide.}
{Si ergo aliquae dignitates per Constantinum esse alienate – ut dicunt – ab Imperio, et cesserint in potestatem Ecclesie, scissa esset tunica inconsutilis [cf. *Mon.* 1.16.3], quam scindere ausi non sunt etiam qui Christum verum Deum lancea perforarunt.}

SECOND ARGUMENT FROM REASON (*Mon.* 3.10.7–9):

3. That the empire cannot destroy itself.

Introduction:

{Moreover, just as the church has its foundation, so too the empire has its own. For the foundation of the church is Christ; hence the Apostle in *Corinthians* says: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." He is the rock on which the church is built.}

{Preterea, sicut Ecclesie suum habet fundamentum, sic et Imperium suum. Nam Ecclesie fundamentum Christus est; unde Apostolus *ad Corinthios*: "Fundamentum aliud nemo potest ponere preter id quod positum est, quod est Christus Iesus" [1 Cor. 3:11]. Ipse est petra super quam edificata est Ecclesia.}

Major premiss:

The foundation of the empire is human right;

Imperii vero fundamentum ius humanum est;

Dante's comment toward the minor premiss:

{Now I say that, just as the church is not allowed to act against its own foundation, but must always rest upon it, in accordance with those words in the *Song of Solomon*: “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?” so too . . . }

{Modo dico quod, sicut Ecclesie fundamento suo contrariari non licet, sed debet semper inniti super illud iuxta illud *Canticorum* “Que est ista, que ascendit de deserto delitiis affluens, innixa super dilectum?” [Song of Solomon, 8:5], sic et . . . }

Minor premiss:

The empire is not allowed to do anything which is in conflict with human right

{but if the empire were to destroy itself that would conflict with human right};

Imperio licitum non est contra ius humanum aliquid facere

{sed contra ius humanum esset, si se ipsum Imperium destrueret};

Conclusion:

Therefore the empire is not allowed to destroy itself.

Ergo Imperio se ipsum destruere non licet.

Dante’s comment on the conclusion:

{Since therefore to divide the empire would be to destroy it—for empire consists precisely in the unity of universal monarchy—it is clear that whoever embodies imperial authority is not allowed to split up the empire. For it is clear from what was said earlier that to destroy the empire is in conflict with human right.}

{Cum ergo scindere Imperium esset destruere ipsum, consistente Imperio in unitate Monarchie universalis, manifestum est quod Imperii auctoritate fungenti scindere Imperium non licet. Quod autem destruere Imperium sit contra ius humanum, ex superioribus est manifestum.}

THIRD ARGUMENT FROM REASON (*Mon.* 3.10.10)

4. That the empire precedes the emperor.

Major premiss:

All jurisdiction is prior to the judge who exercises it

{for the judge is appointed for the sake of the jurisdiction, and not vice versa};

Omnis iurisdictio prior est suo iudice

{iudex enim ad iurisdictionem ordinatur, et non e converso};

Minor premiss:

The empire is a jurisdiction which embraces within its scope every other temporal jurisdiction;

Imperium est iurisdictio omnem temporalem iurisdictionem ambitu suo comprehendens;

Conclusion:

Therefore it [i.e., the empire] is prior to the judge, who is the emperor

{for the emperor is appointed for its sake, and not vice versa}.

Ergo ipsa [i.e., Imperium] est prior suo iudice, qui est Imperator

{quia ad ipsam Imperator est ordinatus, et non e converso}.

FOURTH ARGUMENT FROM REASON (*Mon.* 3.10.10–11)

5. That the emperor, as emperor, cannot change the empire.

Major premiss:

{From this it is clear that}

The emperor, precisely as emperor, cannot change it [i.e., the empire]

{because he derives from it the fact that he is what he is};

{Ex quo patet quod}

Imperator ipsam [i.e., Imperium] permutare non potest in quantum Imperator

{cum ab ea recipiat esse quod est};

Minor premiss:

{Either [Constantine] was emperor when he is said to have conferred this power on the church [i.e., the Donation], or he was not}.

{Aut ille [Constantinus] Imperator erat cum dicitur Ecclesie contulisse, aut non}.

a. **[That] he was not [emperor];**

a. [Quod] non [erat Imperator];

b. **[That] he was [emperor]**

{since such a conferring of power would be a lessening of his own jurisdiction};

b. [Quod] sic [erat Imperator]

{cum talis collatio esset minoratio iurisdictionis, in quantum Imperator hoc facere non poterat};

Conclusion:

a. Then it is obvious that he could not give away any aspect of the empire.

a. Planum est quod nichil poterat de Imperio conferre.

b. Then precisely because he was emperor he could not do it [i.e., change the empire].

b. In quantum Imperator hoc facere non poterat [i.e., Imperium permutare].

FIFTH ARGUMENT FROM REASON (*Mon.* 3.10.12).

6. That the emperor can cut off some part of the empire [false].

Major premiss:

{If one emperor could cut off some portion of the jurisdiction of the empire, then so could another on the same grounds}

{Si unus Imperator aliquam particulam ab Imperii iurisdictione discindere posset, eadem ratione et alius}

The temporal jurisdiction [of the empire] is finite;

Iurisdictio temporalis finita sit;

Minor premiss:

Every finite thing can be destroyed by a finite series of subdivisions;

Omne finitum per finitas decisiones assummat;

Conclusion:

It would follow that the primary jurisdiction [of the empire] could be entirely obliterated.

{and this is against reason}.

Sequeretur quod iurisdictio prima posset annihilari

{quod est irrationabile}.

SIXTH ARGUMENT FROM REASON (*Mon.* 3.10.13–17)

7. That the church could not accept [the Donation] as a possession, nor could Constantine give it as an irrevocable gift.

Dante's comment toward the major premiss:

{Since a person who gives functions as an agent, and a person who receives as a patient, as Aristotle says in the fourth book of the *Ethics* . . . }

{Cum conferens habeat se per modum agentis et cui confertur per modum patientis, ut placet Phylosopho in quarto *ad Nicomacum* . . .}

Major premiss:

For a collation to be legitimate requires a suitable disposition not just in the giver, but in the recipient as well

{“for it seems that the action of active agents is transferred to the ‘patient’ if he is disposed to receive it” [*Ethics*]³⁶⁷};

Non solum ad collationem esse licitam requiritur dispositio conferentis, sed etiam eius cui conferetur

{videtur enim in patiente et disposito actus activorum inesse};

Minor premiss:

But the church was utterly unsuited to receiving temporal things because of the command which expressly forbade it;

Sed Ecclesia omnino indisposita erat ad temporalia recipienda per preceptum prohibivum expressum;

Dante’s comment following the minor premiss:

{as we gather from these words in Matthew “Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor scrip for your journey,” etc. For even if in Luke [22:35–36] we find that this command was relaxed with regard to certain things, yet I have been unable to find that after that prohibition the church was ever granted permission to possess gold and silver. And thus if the church could not receive it, then even supposing that Constantine had been in a position to perform that action, nonetheless the action itself was not possible because of the unsuitability of the “patient” or recipient}.

{ut habemus per Matheum [10:9–10] sic: “Nolite possidere aurum, neque argentum, neque pecuniam in zonis vestris, non peram in via” etc. Nam etsi per Lucam habemus relaxationem precepti quantum ad quedam, ad possessionem tamen auri et argenti licentiatam Ecclesiam post prohibitionem illam invenire non potui. Qua re, si Ecclesia recipere non poterat, dato quod Constantinus hoc facere potuisset de se, actio tamen illa non erat possibilis propter patientis indispositionem.

Conclusion:

It is therefore clear that the church could non accept it as a possession, nor Constantine give it as an irrevocable gift.

Patet igitur quod nec Ecclesia recipere per modum possessionis, nec ille [i.e., Constantinus] conferre per modum alientationis poterat.

Dante's comment on the conclusion:

{The emperor could however consign a patrimony and other resources to the church as a protectorate, provided it was without prejudice to the superior imperial authority, whose unity admits no division. And God's vicar could receive it, not as owner but as administrator of its fruits for the church and for Christ's poor, as the apostles are known to have done.}

{Poterat tamen Imperator in patrociniū Ecclesie Patrimonium et alia deputare, inmoto semper superior dominio, cuius unitas divisionem non patitur. Poterat et vicarius Dei recipere non tanquam possessor, sed tanquam fructum pro Ecclesia pro Cristi pauperibus dispensator: quod apostolos fecisse non ignoratur.}

NOTES

I am indebted to Professors Robert Hollander, John Scott, V. Stanley Benfell, Edward Peters, and Howard Kaminsky for their critical reading of this manuscript. A much earlier redaction of this paper was read at Fifth Biennial Conference on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo on May 21, 1970, and a slightly later version serves as chapter IX in Dabney Park, *Dante as a Reformer* (New Orleans: Tulane University Doctoral Dissertation, 1971), 329–49, written under the guidance of Charles Till Davis.

1. The principal studies of this topic are Bruno Nardi, "La 'Donatio Constantini' e Dante," *Studi Danteschi* 26 (1942): 47–95, reprinted with additions in *Nel Mondo di Dante* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1944), 109–59; Michele Maccarrone, "Il terzo libro della 'Monarchia,'" *Studi Danteschi* 33 (1955): 5–142; Nardi, "Intorno ad una nuova interpretazione del terzo libro della *Monarchia* Dantesca," in *Dal "Convivio" alla "Commedia" (Sei saggi danteschi)* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1960), 151–313; Giovanni Gonnet, "La donazione di Costantino in Dante e presso gli eretici medievali," in *Dante nel pensiero e nella esegesi dei secoli XIV e XV* (Florence: Olschki, 1975), 237–59; Giovanna Puletti, "La Donazione di Costantino nei primi del '300 e la *Monarchia* di Dante," *Medioevo e Rinascimento* 7 (1993): 113–35; Sergio Cristaldi, "Dante, il profetismo gioachimita e la donazione di Costantino," *Lecture Classensi* 29 (2000): 7–65; Anthony Cassell, *The "Monarchia" Controversy: An Historical Study with Accompanying Translations of Dante Alighieri's "Monarchia," Guido Vernani's Refutation of the "Monarchia" Composed by Dante, and Pope John XXII's Bull "Si fratrum"* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004); see also *Enciclopedia dantesca*, s.v. "Costantino," by Enzo Petrucchi, II (1970), 236–39, and "Donazione di Costantino," by Pier Giorgio Ricci, II (1970), 569–70.

2. On the Constantine legends see Samuel N.C. Lieu, "Constantine in Legendary Literature," *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Lenski (Cambridge at the University Press, 2006), 298, and Lieu, "From History to Legend and Legend to History: The Medieval and Byzantine Transformation of Constantine's Vita," in *Constantine: History, Historiography, and Legend*, ed. Samuel N.C. Lieu and Dominic Monserrat (London: Routledge, 1998), 136–49. For a thorough treatment of the issue of wealth and the church in the fourth century, see Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 A.D.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

3. Eusebius of Caesara, *Life of Constantine*, 1: 28, trans. A. Cameron and S.G. Hall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 80. Eusebius claimed that he heard the story directly from Constantine

himself. See H. A. Drake, "The Impact of Constantine on Christianity," *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, 113.

4. Otto of Freising, *The Two Cities: A Chronicle of Universal History to the Year 1146 A.D.*, 4:1, trans. Charles Christopher Mierow, ed. by Austin P. Evans and Charles Knapp (New York: Columbia University Press), 277.

5. Lorenzo Valla, *On the Donation of Constantine*, trans. G. W. Bowersock (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).

6. Johannes Fried, *The Donation of Constantine and Constitutum Constantini: The Misinterpretation of a Fiction and its Original Meaning* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 1. See also Christopher B. Coleman, *The Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine: Text and Translation into English* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), 1.

7. *Vita sancti Sylvestri papae et confessoris*. One version of the life of St. Sylvester, current in Dante's time, is to be found in a *passionale* (a book of Matins readings for saints' days) written by one Matthew the Florentine in 1204 and published by Boninus Mombritius, *Sanctuarium* (c. 1477–78), ff. 280v–284v, pp. 570–80 (= *Vita Sylvestri*, ed. Mombritius); this version is available at DOI urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00067878–9 (= *Passionale*); Louis Duchesne, *Le liber pontificalis*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1886), cix ff., says that the core of this apocryphal story was written in the East and that it was expanded in Rome in the late fifth century. Another version of the life of St. Sylvester found its way into Iacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, as "Historia de Sancto Silvestro," available at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/voragine/silv.shtml> (= *Legenda aurea*); English translation by William Granger Ryan, *The Golden Legend* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 2:62–70. Still useful is J. J. I. Dollinger's *Fables Regarding the Popes in the Middle Ages*, trans. Alfred Plummer (New York, 1872), 88–182.

8. See F. E. Brightman, "Some Dante Notes," *Modern Language Review* 14 (1919): 326–27; and *Dantis Alagherii Epistolae: The Letters of Dante*, ed. Paget Toynbee, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), hereafter cited as Toynbee edition, 49–51. Toynbee quotes this part of the story from Bodleian MS Canon. Misc. 230, f. 32v.

9. The seven edicts are described in both versions of the story, but they are not quoted by Toynbee.

10. *Vita Sylvestri*, ed. Mombritius, f. 283va: "Quarta die privilegium ecclesiae romanae pontificique contulit: ut in toto orbe romano sacerdotes ita hunc caput habeant."

11. The word *papa* (father) was used for any bishop in the fourth century. It was not until the sixth century that the imperial chancery at Constantinople addressed the bishops of Rome with the title *papa*, and not until the eleventh century that Pope Gregory VII declared it to be their exclusive title. See Philippe Levillain, s.v., "pope," *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Philippe Levillain (New York: Rutledge, 2002), 3:1227–28, and s.v. "pope," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F. L. Cross, 3rd edn. revised by Elizabeth A. Livingstone (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1317. A more thorough treatment may be found in Yves Congar, "Titres donnés au Pape," *Concilium* 108 (1975): 55–64.

12. This document was edited by Horst Fuhrmann in *Das Constitutum Constantini (Konstantische Schenkung)*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Fontes Iuris Germanici Antiqui, 10 (Hannover: Hahn-sche, 1968), 56–98 (= ed. Fuhrmann). An English translation may be found in E. F. Henderson, *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages* (London: Biblo and Tannen, 1965), 319–29. Part of this version of the story is also in Gratian, *Decretum*, Distinctio 96, c. 14, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. Aemilius Friedberg (Leipzig, 1879); photographic reprint (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1959) (= *CICan*), I, 342–45. The most complete study of this document is by Fried, *Donation*.

13. J. W. C. Ward, *A History of the Early Church to A.D. 500* (London: Methuen, 1937), 215–16. He says that as early as the beginning of the fifth century, "the very absence of the Emperor from Rome threw into strong relief the prestige of the Pope, and even made it necessary for him to exercise much political influence which would never have fallen to his lot if he had been overshadowed by the rule of the State. The Bishop of Rome was thus already the undisputed head of a great organization over which the Emperor had very little control." See also Louis Duchesne, *The Beginnings of the Temporal Sovereignty of the Popes, A.D. 754–1073*, trans. Arnold Harris Mathew (London:

Kegan Paul, 1907), 15 and 28, who says that papal influence went into temporal affairs, that Rome and the surrounding area was a kind of "apostolic sanctuary," and that "Papal authority certainly extended in the direction of sovereignty," but it was not until Stephen II that the popes became the recognized political leaders of the former Duchy of Rome, and therefore took on the role of temporal lords.

14. R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (London: Penguin Books, 1970), 225–30.

15. Oswald J. Reichel, *The See of Rome in the Middle Ages* (London, 1870), 348–49.

16. E. R. Chamberlin, *The Bad Popes* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969), 13.

17. Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050–1300* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 16, says that from the time of Gregory I (590–604), the pope was "de facto ruler of the city," and that "from that year [i.e., 756] we can date the beginning of formal papal claim to sovereignty in central Italy." However, Thomas X. Noble, "Morbidity and Vitality in the History of the Early Medieval Papacy," *The Catholic Historical Review* 81 (1995): 505–40, esp. 508–18, cautions that there is little evidence of strong papal claims to juridical and legal authority until much later.

18. Lieu, "Constantine," 301–2; Döllinger, *Fables*, 89–99.

19. Duchesne, *Temporal Sovereignty*, 32–48. The story is also told in William Russell, *The History of Modern Europe* (London, 1818), 1:40–41. Key documents, including the Donation of Pepin, are translated by Oliver J. Thatcher and Edgar H. McNeal, *A Source Book for Mediaeval History: Selected Documents Illustrating the History of Europe in the Middle Age* (New York: Scribner's, 1905), 37–38 and 102–5.

20. Gratian, *Decretum*, Prima Pars, Dist. 96, c. 14, *CICan*, 1:342–45.

21. F. Zinkeisen, "The Donation of Constantine as Applied by the Roman Church," *English Historical Review* 9 (1894): 625–32; see also the helpful comments on Zinkeisen's article by Henry Charles Lea, "The Donation of Constantine," *English Historical Review* 10 (1895): 86–87; and J. P. Kirsch, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1911), s.v. "Donation of Constantine."

22. Robert Black, "The Donation of Constantine: A New Source for the Concept of the Renaissance," in *Languages and Images of Renaissance Italy*, ed. Alison Brown (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 51–85 at 54–55, and Lieu, "From History to Legend," 148–49, who quotes Martin Luther's reaction in 1520 to the news that the Donation had been forged: "Good heavens! What darkness and wickedness is at Rome . . . I am in such a fit that I scarcely doubt that the Pope is Antichrist expected by the world." John M. Headley, *Luther's View of Church History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 198, says that Luther called the Donation "an absurdity," but he did not see the age of Constantine as the beginning of the fall of the Church.

23. *Dante: Monarchy*, trans. and ed. Prue Shaw, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996) (= Shaw trans.), 80, n. 1. Quotations in English are taken from the Shaw translation unless otherwise noted; I have also adopted Shaw's chapter numbering.

24. Except where otherwise noted, I use the Italian text edited by Giorgio Petrocchi, Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, Le Opere di Dante Alighieri, Edizione Nazionale a cura della Società Dantesca Italiana (Verona: Mondatori, 1966–1967). On Canto 19 see especially Charles Till Davis, "Canto XIX: Simoniacs," in *Lectura Dantis: Inferno*, 264, ed. Allen Mandelbaum, Anthony Oldcorn, and Charles Ross (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) and John A. Scott, "The Rock of Peter and *Inferno* XIX," *Romance Philology* 23 (1970), 462–79. Scott, 479, notes that Ernesto Parodi, *Poesia e storia nella "Divina Commedia"* (Vicenza: Pozza, 1965), 357, called *Inferno* 19 "quel terribile canto XIX, che, contenendo l'invettiva contro i Pontefici simoniaci, è come il programma religioso-politico dell'intero *Inferno*." See also V. Stanley Benfell, s.v. "Simony," and "Simonists," in *The Dante Encyclopedia*, ed. Richard Lansing (New York: Garland, 2000), 781–82, and Michael Sherberg, "Coin of the Realm: Dante and the Simonists," *Dante Studies*, 129 (2011), 7–23.

25. References to the Bible are to the *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version*, translated from the Latin Vulgate (Charlotte, N.C.: Saint Benedict Press, 2009). Subsequent quotes in English from the Bible are from this edition, but noted only by book, chapter, and verse.

26. Davis, "Canto XIX," 264.
27. Scott, "The Rock of Peter," 464.
28. Davis, "Canto XIX," 263, declares, "Nowhere in the poem is [Dante] more personally involved. Nowhere does he seem to regard his message as more important to his purpose."
29. Davis, "Canto XIX," 269, says that "The Apocalypse had clearly identified the woman with Rome; Dante's exegesis therefore can be called literal. It was also radical, however, in extending the meaning of the symbol to include the papal as well as the pagan city and in connecting the image of the woman with her new governors the popes." I would suggest that this literal meaning is reinforced by the directness of Dante's accusation using the words "Di voi."
30. Of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century commentators, only Francesco Torracca (1905), *La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri nuovamente commentata da Francesco Torracca*, 4th ed. (Milan: Segati, 1920), comment to *Inf.* 19:115–17, highlights the word *prese*, without further elaboration. Robert and Jean Hollander, in *Inferno* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), translate *da te prese* as "had from you," following John D. Sinclair, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, vol. 1, *Inferno* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), 243: "had from thee." Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri* (Boston, 1867): "left." Charles H. Grandgent, *La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1933), 175 (in note): "received." Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Comedy of Dante Alighieri the Florentine, Cantica I: Hell (L'Inferno)* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1949), 191: "received." Louis Biancolli, *Dante: The Divine Comedy* (New York: Washington Square, 1968), 86, hereafter cited as Biancolli translation: "received." Robert Pinsky, *The Inferno of Dante* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1994), 197: "accepted." Henry Francis Cary, *The Vision: or Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise of Dante Alighieri* (New York, 1868): "gained." Three of the English translators reviewed use "took" with no further discussion: Charles Eliot Norton, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929), 125; Thomas G. Bergin, *Dante Alighieri: Inferno* (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1948), 66; and John Ciardi, *Dante Alighieri: The Inferno* (New York: New American Library, 1954), 170.
31. On Dante's mission to remember and tell about his journey, see Gian Roberto Sarolli, *Dante "scriba Dei"* (Turin: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1963) and also Robert Hollander, "Dante as Uzzah? ('Purg.' X 567, and 'Ep.' XI 9–12," in *Sotto il segno di Dante. Scritti in onore di Francesco Mazzoni*, ed. Leonella Coglievina and Domenico De Robertis (Florence: Le Lettere, 1998), 143–51.
32. Since the fourth or fifth century, a mosaic called the *Navicella* depicting the scene in Matt. 14:24–32 of the apostles' boat being tossed by a tempest decorated the entrance to St. Peter's in Rome. Dante would have certainly seen this mosaic when he was in Rome in 1300 or 1301. In 1310 Giotto was commissioned to reconstruct the mosaic. Claus Virch, "A Page from Vasari's Book of Drawings," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, n.s. 19 (1961), 186, says that this was Giotto's "most conspicuously monumental work, perhaps his masterwork . . . it must have been a spectacular sight." If Giotto and Dante were friends, Dante would have heard about the painter's *Navicella*. Dante here transforms the image of the boat laden with apostles to a boat laden with worldly power and goods, thanks to the Donation of Constantine. It is worth noting that Dante had the voice from Heaven bewail the condition of the *navicella*, thereby choosing not to use the commonplace declaration that at the moment of the Donation the voice from Heaven cried out "Hodie infusum est venenum in ecclesie Dei." Dante also uses the word *naviculum* for the church in *Ep.* 8:5, Toybee edition, 133, where he says it is foundering (*fluctuantem*).
33. Hollander and Hollander, note to *Inf.* 32.124–29, p. 679.
34. For a careful comparison of the whores in *Inferno* 19 and *Purgatorio* 32, see Charles Till Davis, "Rome and Babylon in Dante," in *From Florence to Rome to the Heavenly Jerusalem, Dante: The Critical Complex*, vol. 5, edited by Richard Lansing (New York: Routledge, 2003), 72–76; reprinted from *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth*, ed. P.A. Ramsey (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona State University, 1982), 19–49.
35. This point is made by Bruno Nardi, "La 'Donatio,'" 155.
36. Compare *Mon.* 2.11.8. Constantine's pious intention in awarding the Donation reflects the statement in the *Vita sancti Sylvestri papae* about the Roman Empire's foundation in piety.

37. Charles T. Davis, *Dante and the Idea of Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 7; John A. Scott, *Understanding Dante* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 180.

38. Nick Havely, *Dante and the Franciscans: Poverty and the Papacy in the "Commedia"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 155.

39. For an interesting treatment of *Inferno* 27, see Ronald Herzman, "'Io non Enëa, io non Paolo sono': Ulysses, Guido da Montefeltro, and Franciscan Traditions in the *Commedia*," *Dante Studies* 123 (2005): 23–69.

40. Bonaventure was not canonized until 1482.

41. St. Augustine, *Epistola ad Bonifacium* 9, PL 33, 809, was often quoted in this regard: "Si autem privatim quae nobis sufficiant, possidemus, non sunt illa nostra, sed pauperum quorum procuracionem quodammodo gerimus, non proprietatem nobis usurpatione damnabili vindicamus." See for example John of Paris, *Tractatus de regia et papali*, ed. Jean Leclercq, *Jean de Paris et l'ecclésiologie du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 1942), 187, hereafter cited as Leclercq edition.

42. Even Bruno Nardi missed this point; in "La 'Donatio'," he says: "Il patrimonio di S. Pietro non è, per Dante, un dominio politico, ma una 'dote' a favore della chiesa e dei poveri di Cristo" (emphasis added).

43. *Convivio*, ed. Franca Brambilla Ageno, trans. Richard Lansing, Edizione Nazionale (Florence: Le Lettere, 1995), available at <http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/convivio.html>: "Monarchia, cioè uno solo principato, e uno prencipe avere; lo quale, tutto possedendo e più desiderare non possendo, li regi tegna contenti nelli termini delli regni, sì che pace intra loro sia."

44. S.v. "Monarchia" (Pier Giorgio Ricci); Giorgio Petrocchi, *Vita di Dante* (Bari: Laterza, 1986; originally published in 1983), 192.

45. *Ibid.*

46. The image of the seamless tunic comes from John 19:23, the tunic of Christ for which the soldiers drew lots. Dante returns to the seamless tunic in *Monarchia* 3.10.16, but here instead of saying that the tunic has already been rent, he maintains that if Constantine had alienated any imperial dignities (via the Donation), the "seamless garment would have been torn which even those who pierced Christ the true God with their lance did not divide." Boniface VIII had appropriated the image to describe the unity of the church in *Unam Sanctam*, while Dante uses it for the unity of the empire. The Latin text can be found in Carl Mirbt, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums und des Römischen Katoizismus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1911), 162–64 (no. 309).

47. "Qualiter autem se habuerit orbis ex quo tunica ista inconsutilis cupiditatis ungue scissuram primitus passa est, et legere possumus et utinam non videre." Unless otherwise noted, I use the Latin edition and chapter numbering by Prue Shaw, Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia* (Florence: Le Lettere, 2009), hereafter cited as Shaw edition.

48. Shaw translation, 28 n. 5.

49. "Nec iam depauperatio talis absque Dei iudicio fit, cum nec pauperibus, quorum patrimonia sunt Ecclesie facultates, inde subveniatur, nec ab offerente Imperio cum gratitudine teneantur."

50. "Redeant unde venerunt: venerunt bene, redeunt male, quia bene data, et male possea sunt."

51. "O felicem populum, o Ausoniam te gloriosam, si vel nunquam infirmator ille Imperii tui natus fuisset, vel nunquam sua pia intentio ipsum fefellisset!" I have used my own translation because Constantine's *pia intentio* is the subject of the sentence.

52. Antonio Pagliaro, "'Ahi Costantin'. . .," in *Ulisse: Ricerche semantiche sulla Divina Commedia* (Messina: D'Anna, 1966), 1:285.

53. In the *Commedia* the only cognate he uses is *dona*, and that only once, when Solomon describes the freely given light that the souls in Heaven will receive upon the resurrection of the body (*Par.* 14.46). He uses various versions of the root *dona*—several times in the *Convivio* and *Il Fiore*, always in the sense of give, giver, gift. *Donare* is one of the sweet and polished words he lists in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, 2.7.5. The word *donatione* appears only once in the entire canon, in *Epistles* 10.4, where he chooses that word to describe the copy of the *Paradiso* that he sent with the letter to Cangrande.

54. The translations of the seven syllogisms are mine. This brief statement is a foretaste of Dante's conclusion, which is expressed more definitively in *Mon.* 3.10.16–17.

55. "Nemo habere potest de iure nisi ab Ecclesia."

56. "Dico quod sua probatio nulla est, quia Constantinus alienare non poterat Imperii dignitatem, nec Ecclesia recipere."

57. Of course the fundamental argument of the *Monarchia* is to explain and defend the concept that the world should be ruled by a single monarchy: "Primum igitur videndum quid est quod 'temporalis Monarchia' dicitur, typo ut dicam et secundum intentionem. Est ergo temporalis Monarchia, quam dicunt 'Imperium', unicus principatus et super omnes in tempore vel in hiis et super hiis que tempore mesurantur" (*Mon.* 1.2.1–2).

58. In making these arguments, Dante reflected the interest in theories of inalienability of sovereign rights developed during the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. See Peter N. Riesen-berg, *Inalienability of Sovereignty in Medieval Political Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956; repr. New York: AMS, 1970).

59. Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia*, ed. Gustavo Vinay (Florence: Sansoni, 1950), 246–47 n. 1, hereafter cited as Vinay edition.

60. Bruno Nardi, "La 'Donatio,'" 127–29.

61. We know that Dante was well aware of the phrase "par in parem non habet imperium" because he quoted it in *Mon.* 1.10.3, but he did not see fit to quote it in relation to the Donation of Constantine.

62. See esp. *Mon.* 3.10.8–9. Franciscus Accursius (Senior), *Glossa ordinaria, Corpus iuris civilis, Authenticum, Codex, Liber 10–12 Coll. I, Tit. VI, prefatio, Conferens generi* (Venice, 1489), f. 11va, p. 22: "Conferens generi apparet ergo quod nec papa in temporalibus nec imperator in spiritualibus se debent immiscere. Nunquid habet ergo papa temporalem iurisdictionem in hiis que sunt imperii, quod constantinus imperator donavit beato silvestro pape? Videtur quod sic licet immensa fuerit donatio, preterea quod vult princeps hoc est lex. Item sicut patrimonialia ita imperialia donare potest, cum nulla sit differentia. Et contra videtur quod non quia tunc esset augustus dictus. Item imperare non potuit pari, idest imperatori venienti post se. Item ne turbetur opus [Dei] si clerici intromittunt se in temporalibus. Item ne unus duorum officium habeat. Sed licet solutio facti ad nos non pertineat, solvimus de iure quod non valuit talis collatio sive donatio. . . quia sic posset totum imperium perire." In 1942 Nardi, "La Donatio," 127 n. 3, first called attention to this important passage. Walter's Ullmann's exaggerated statement about this passage, *Medieval Papalism: The Political Theories of the Medieval Canonists* (London: Methuen, 1949), 164 and n. 2, is off course: "Dante's refutation of the Donation appears like a paraphrase of the civilian's [i.e., Accursius's] statement." The point was repeated by Vinay in his edition, 246 n. 1, who quotes almost all of the passage but says that Dante's "argomenti si possono tutti ricondurre a quelli introdotti dalla *Glossa*," which is not quite accurate. Michele Maccarrone, "Il terzo libro della 'Monarchia,'" *Studi Danteschi* 33 (1955): 74–75 n. 2, repeats the reference to the name of Augustus which Dante does not mention. Manfred, in his Manifesto to the Romans (May 24, 1265), in Eugenio Dupré Theseider, *L'idea imperiale di Roma nella tradizione del medioevo* (Milan: Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale, 1942), 223–24, had made the arguments from the name Augustus and from *par in parem non habet imperium* that Dante does not mention.

63. A brief phrase from Accursius, *Glossa ordinaria*, contains this point: "ne turbetur opus Dei si clerici intromittant se in temporalibus." Dante's comments on the major premise, the minor premise, and the conclusion of this syllogism extend the argument against the church's involvement in temporalities much farther than this brief phrase.

64. *Oxford University English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, ed. William Little, H.W. Fowler, and J. Coulson, rev. and ed. C.T. Onions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), II, 340, s.v. "collation," says that a collation is the bestowal of a benefice on a clergyman. As mentioned, Dante avoids the word "donation," using instead "collation."

65. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IV, 1, trans. Martin Ostwabi (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), 85.

66. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri ethicorum*, Liber 4, cap. 1, n. 13, in *Opera Omnia*, 4 (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1980), 173, says: "manifestum est autem quoniam ex eo quod aliquis dat, benefacit et bene operatur; ad sumptionem autem, idest receptionem pertinet bene pati, inquantum scilicet aliquis recipit unde oportet, vel non turpe operari, inquantum scilicet non recipit unde non oportet." Cf. *Conv.* 4.20.7, Edizione Nazionale: "Ché, secondo che dice lo Filosofo nel secondo dell'Anima, 'le cose convengono essere disposte alli loro agenti, e [a] ricevere li loro atti' (Aristotle, *De anima*, 2.2).

67. "Sed Ecclesia omnino indisposita erat ad temporalia recipienda per preceptum prohibitivum expressum, ut habemus per Matheum sic: 'Nolite possidere aurum, neque argentum, neque pecuniam in zonis vestris, non peram in via,' etc. Nam etsi per Lucam habemus relaxationem precepti quantum ad quedam, *ad possessionem tamen auri et argenti licentiatam Ecclesiam post prohibitionem illam invenire non potui* (emphasis added)." I have used the translation by Donald Nicholl, Dante Alighieri, *Monarchy and Three Political Letters* (London: Weidenfeld, 1954), hereafter cited as Nicholl translation, because Prue Shaw's translation weakens the effect of this passage by using "unsuited" for *indisposita*, "provide not" for *Noli possidere*, and of "brass" for *pecuniam*. Dante's interpretation of Matt. 10:9 was significantly at variance with the standard and strictly allegorical reading found in the *Glossa ordinaria*, in *Biblia Sacra cum glossa interlineari ordinaria, et Nicolai Lyran Postilla, eiusdemque Moralitatibus, Burgenis Additionibus et Throningi Replicis* (Venice, 1588), V, f. 36v: "Per aurum, ostenditur sapientia secularis. Per argentum, facundia rhetorica. Per pecuniam in zone: sapientia abscondita. Per peram, onus seculi. Per calceamenta, mortuorum operum exempla."

68. Nicholl translation.

69. Luke 22:35–36: "Then he said unto them: 'But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip; and he that hath not, let him sell his coat, and buy a sword.'"

70. "Qua re, si Ecclesia recipere non poterat, dato quod Constantinus hoc facere potuisset de se, actio tamen illa non erat possibilis propter patientis indispositionem. Patet igitur quod nec Ecclesia recipere per modum possessionis, nec ille conferre per modum alientationis poterat."

71. "Poterat tamen Imperator in patrociniū Ecclesie Patrimonium et alia deputare, inmoto semper superiori dominio, cuius unitas divisionem non patitur. Poterat et vicarius Dei recipere non tanquam possessor, sed tanquam fructum pro Ecclesia pro Cristi pauperibus dispensator: quod apostolos fecisse non ignoratur." I have altered Prue Shaw's translation in two ways. First, Shaw's version reads "consign a patrimony and other resources to the guardianship of the church," implying that the church is the guardian involved in this statement, but the guardian or protector in a *patroncinium* is the patron offering the grant. Second, I have removed the word "and" because it is not in the Latin text: "for the church for Christ's poor."

72. Yet many Dante scholars have apparently been reluctant to accept the poet's total rejection of the church's right to own any property at all. See, for example, Felice Tocco, "Questioni cronologiche intorno al De Monarchia di Dante," *Bulletino della Società Dantesca Italiana* 8 (1900–1901): 245: Dante "ammette bene che la Chiesa possa possedere, e contro la legittimità del patrimonio non ha obiezioni da muovere . . . Non si deve dunque negare il diritto che ha la Chiesa di accettare donazioni e possedere patrimonio"; Vinay edition, 178 n. 1: "Dante ammette . . . una proprietà ecclesiastica; poi dice che le 'facultates' della Chiesa sono 'patrimonium' dei poveri"; and 179 n. 2: "Dante non aveva idee precise sul carattere della sovranità imperiale e certo non si era mai posto in termini chiari il dilemma 'proprietà'"; John J. Rolbiecki, *The Political Philosophy of Dante Alighieri* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Doctoral Dissertation, 1921), 124: "It appears . . . that Dante in his zeal for the integrity of the empire has here spoken a little more strictly than he really intended." Even Michele Maccarrone, "Il terzo libro," 71–111, and Pier Giorgio Ricci, "Dante e l'Impero di Roma," in *Dante e Roma: Atti del convegno di studi*, Comitato nazionale per le celebrazioni del VII centenario della nascita di Dante (Florence: Le Monnier, 1965), 140 and 144–45, hedged when it came to dealing with this issue. See Charles Till Davis, "Dante and Ecclesiastical Property," in *Law in Medieval Life and Thought*, ed. E. B. King and S. J. Ridyard (Sewanee, Tennessee: The Press of the University of the South, 1990), 244–57, reprinted in *Dante and History: From Florence to Rome to the Heavenly Jerusalem*, ed. Richard Lansing (New York: Routledge, 2003), 294–307. While Davis says that Dante "seems to deny clerics any proprietary rights at all," he softens the point

by saying that "there is an impressionistic and allusive quality about Dante's arguments in regard to these matters that should remind us that he was not a jurist, but rather a philosopher and theologian with intense political and legal interests, and also a most eloquent rhetorician" (300). Similarly, Giovanna Puletti, "La Donazione," 129, says that "l'Alighieri sembra al fondo non voler inficiare la Donazione di Costantino, mentre la accetta con un significato diverso rispetto a quello vulgato." Guido Vernani, in his *Tractatus de reprobatione Monarchie*, in *Il più antico oppositore politico di Dante: Guido Vernani da Rimini, Testo critico del "De Reprobatione Monarchie"*, ed. Nevio Matteini (Padua: CEDAM, 1958), 114–15, was clear that Dante had said that "ecclesia non est capax terrene possessionis"; Guido said that in holding this position, Dante "ignoranter dicit, non intelligens neque de quibus loquitur neque de quibus affirmat," pronouncing finally that "ille qui dixit quod terrenarum possessionum Dei ecclesia non est capax." Felice Battaglia, *Impero chiesa e stati particolari nel pensiero di Dante* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1944), 54, also understood this point: "Il diniego della donazione di Costantino, a nostro avviso, non solo invalida nelle basi il dominio temporale dei papi, storicamente formatosi, ma è in relazione al più ampio diniego fatto da Dante della proprietà privata da parte della Chiesa."

73. Toynbee edition, 58. On this and Dante's other political letters see especially Lino Pertile, "Dante Looks Forward and Back: Political Allegory in the Epistles," *Dante Studies* 115 (1997): 1–17.

74. Toynbee edition, 61, except that I have changed Toynbee's "God ordained the Roman Prince beforehand" to "God predestined the Roman Prince" because Dante uses the word *praedestinasse*.

75. *Ibid.*, 57: "Et Hic [i.e., Christ], quum ad revelationem Spiritus, Homo factus, evangelizaret in terris, quasi dirimens duo regna, Sibi et Caesari universa distribuens, alterutri duxit reddi quae sua sum."

76. "Si etiam Constantinus auctoritatem non habuisset, in patrocinium Ecclesie illa que de Imperio deputavit ei de iure deputare non potuisset."

77. Leviticus 11:43 and 2:11.

78. "And the Lord said to Aaron, 'You shall possess nothing in their land, neither shall you have a portion among them'" (Numbers 18:20). See also Deuteronomy 11:8–9.

79. "Sed nec per divinam [legem]: omnis nanque divina lex duorum Testamentorum gremio continetur; in quo quidem gremio reperire non possum temporalium sollicitudinem sive curam sacerdotio primo vel novissimo commendatam fuisse. Quinymo invenio sacerdotes primos ab illa de precepto remotos, ut patent per ea que Deus ad Moysen [Num. 18:20 and 25]; et sacerdotes novissimos, per ea que Christus ad discipulos [Matt. 10:9]: quam quidem ab eis esse remotam possibile non est, si regiminis temporalis auctoritas a sacerdotio demanaret, cum saltem in auctorizando sollicitudo provisionis instaret, et deinde cautela continua ne auctorizatus a tramite rectitudinis deviaret."

80. "Virtus auctorizandi regnum nostre mortalitatis est contra naturam Ecclesie: ergo non est de numero virtutum suarum."

81. Scott, *Understanding Dante*, 38, points out that "The Aristotelian term *forma* designates the 'medium' that actualizes potency."

82. "Vitam enim ipsius ydea fuit et exemplar militantis Ecclesie, presertim pastorum, maxime summi, cuius est pascere agnos et oves."

83. "Cristus huiusmodi regnum coram Pilato abnegavit: 'Regnum' inquit 'meum non est de hoc mundo; si ex hoc mundo esset regnum meum, ministri mei utique decertarent ut non traderer Iudeis; nunc autem regnum meum non est hinc.'"

84. "Ut exemplar Ecclesie, regni huius curam non habebat."

85. "Formale igitur est Ecclesie illud idem dicere, illud idem sentire."

86. "Ex quo colligitur quod virtus auctorizandi regnum hoc sit contra naturam Ecclesie."

87. "Sufficiens igitur . . . probatum est auctoritatem Imperii ab Ecclesia minime dependere."

88. "Dicunt adhuc quidam quod Constantinus imperator, mundatus a lepra intercessionem Silvestri tunc summi Pontificis, Imperii sedem, scilicet Romam, donavit Ecclesie cum multis aliis Imperii dignitatibus. Ex quo arguunt dignitates illas deinde neminem assummere posse nisi ab Ecclesia recipiat, cuius eas esse dicunt; et ex hoc bene sequeretur auctoritatem unam ab alia dependere, ut ipsi volunt."

89. Nardi, "Intorno," 240; see also "La 'Donatio,'" 144–47.

90. Maccarrone, "Il terzo libro," 76; Gratian's *Decretum*, Dist. 96, c. 13 and 14, *CICan*, 1:342–45. Here I must agree with Nardi.
91. Isidore Mercatoris, *Decretalium Collectio*, PL 130, 245–52.
92. The *Constitutum Constantini*, 13; ed. Fuhrmann, 84–85; English translation by Ernest F. Henderson, *Select Historical Documents*, 319–29, at 328.
93. *Constitutum Constantini*, 13; ed. Fuhrmann, 84–85; English translation by Ernest F. Henderson, *Select Historical Documents*, 319–29, at 328.
94. *Ibid.*, 18, ed. Fuhrmann, 94–95: "iustum non est, ut illic imperator terrenus habeat postestatem"; Gratian, *Decretum*, Dist. 96, c. 14, *CICan*, 1:343 (my translation). It should be noted that the *Constitutum Constantini* 20, contains the following addition at the end of the document, not found in Pseudo-Isidore or Gratian: "Ibique eidem dei apostolo spondentes, nos cuncta *inviolabiter* conservare et nostris successoribus imperatoribus conservanda in mandatis relinqui, beatissimo patri nostro Silvestro summo pontifici et universali papae eiusque per eum cunctis successoribus pontificibus, domino deo et salvatore nostro Iesu Christo annuente, tradidimus *perenniter* atque feliciter *possidenda* (emphasis added)." The use of *inviolabiter* suggests that the property involved could not be alienated.
95. *Ibid.*, 13, ed. Fuhrmann, 85–86.
96. *Mon.* 3.10.17.
97. *Legenda aurea*, "Historia de Santo Silvestro," 3. It is worth noting that, although the *Constitutum Constantini* drew heavily on the legend of St. Sylvester, the forger managed to leave out this reference to Rome's founding in piety.
98. *Ep.* 5.3, Toynbee edition, 51: "quum sit Caesar, et maiestas eius de fonte defluat pietatis." In the *Actus Sylvestri*, Constantine addresses the crowd saying "Audite me, comites et commilitones, et omnes populi qui adstatis, Romani imperii dignitas de fonte nascitur pietatis." I have used the word "authority" for *dignitas* instead of Toynbee's "sovereignty" because the full meaning of sovereignty did not exist until later; see Walter Ullmann, "The Development of the Medieval Idea of Sovereignty," *English Historical Review* 64 (1949): 1–33.
99. F. E. Brightman, "Some Dante Notes," *Modern Language Notes* 14 (1919): 326–27, cites Bodleian MS Canon. Misc. 230 as his source; Toynbee edition, 49–51 n. 1. Toynbee provides a long quote from the Bodleian manuscript (f. 32v), noting that "it is quite possible, therefore, that Dante may have known the legend of St. Sylvester" from this source, "quite apart from the *Legenda aurea*." It is interesting that the *Passionale* describes Constantine's leprosy as "elefantiae," a word not found in the *Legenda aurea* version, a detail that reinforces the suggestion that Dante may have relied on the *Passionale* instead of the more widely known *Legenda aurea*.
100. *Passionale*, 576 and passim; *Legenda aurea* 2 and passim.
101. Although he wrote later than Dante, Giovanni Villani's *Chronicle*, 1:59, *Villani's Chronicle: Being Selections from the First Nine Books of the Croniche Fiorentine of Giovanni Villani*, tr. Rose E. Selfe and ed. Philip H. Wicksteed (London: Constable, 1906), offers a glimpse of what may be thought of as the common awareness of the Donation in Dante's day: "Constantine . . . endowed the Church with all the possessions of Rome, and gave liberty to the Christians in the time of the blessed Pope Sylvester, who baptized him and made him a Christian, cleansing him from leprosy by the power of Christ. . . . The said Constantine caused many churches to be built in Rome to the honour of Christ, and having destroyed all the temples of paganism and of the idols, and established the Holy Church in her liberty and lordship, and having brought the temporal affairs of the Church under due system and order, he departed to Constantinople" (38).
102. Richard Kay, "Roman Law in Dante's *Monarchia*," in *Law in Medieval Life and Thought*, ed. Edward B. King and Susan J. Ridyard (Sewanee, Tenn.: University of the South), 263.
103. What follows pertains primarily but not exclusively to Roman law. For Dante's familiarity with and use of canon law, see P. Fedele, "Dante e il diritto canonico," *Ephemerides Iuris Canonici* 21 (1965): 213–396.
104. Davis, "Ecclesiastical Property," 294–307. At 300 and 307, Davis downplays Dante's legal abilities: "Dante's theory was rather general and theoretical, not detailed and legalistic . . . we are dealing with a poet and publicist rather than a systematic theorist." Kay, "Roman Law," 263, agrees: "we can conclude that Dante was certainly capable of using Roman law when he chose. But . . . we

should also note that his juristic expertise seems to be homemade. There is a decidedly amateurish air to his citations."

105. Robert Hollander, "Dante and Cino da Pistoia," *Dante Studies* 110 (1992): 202.

106. Davis, "Ecclesiastical Property," 296, n. 3, discussing the difference of opinion between Bruno Nardi, "La 'donatio,'" 109–59, and Pagliaro, "'Ahi Costantin' . . .," 253–91.

107. I am inclined to think that Piero Fiorelli, "Sul senso del diritto nella *Monarchia*," *Lecture Classensi* 16 (1986): 79–97, would agree with me on this point.

108. *Mon.* 3.10.8–9.

109. Edward Peters, "The Frowning Pages: Scythians, Garamantes, Florentines, and the Two Laws," in *The "Divine Comedy" and the Encyclopedia of the Arts and Sciences*, Acts of the International Dante Symposium, 13–16 November 1983, Hunter College, New York, ed. Giuseppe Di Scipio and Aldo Scaglione (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1988), 285–314, esp. 293–95; Lorenzo Valterza, "Dante's Justinian, Cino's Corpus: The Hermeneutics of Poetry and Law," *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n.s., 37 (2006): 89–110. Bruno Nardi, "Nomina sunt consequentia rerum," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 93 (1929): 105, points out that Dante refers to the *Corpus iuris civilis* with a respect equivalent to his citations of Scripture, using "sì come è scritto" for both, and he notes that the poet must have had some familiarity with the *Corpus iuris civilis* as early as the writing of the *Vita Nuova*. On Dante and Roman law see also Filippo Cancelli, *Enciclopedia dantesca*, s.v. "Diritto Romano"; Pier Giorgio Ricci, "Dante e l'Impero di Roma," in *Dante e Roma*, 137–49; L. Chiappelli, "Dante in rapporto alle fonti del diritto ed alla letteratura giuridica del suo tempo," *Archivio storico italiano*, 5th ser., 41 (1908): 2–44, and "Ancora su Dante e il diritto romano," *Giornale dantesco* 20 (1912): 202–6; M. Chiudano, "Dante e il diritto romano," *Giornale dantesco* 20 (1912): 37–56 and 94–119; Francesco Ercole, "La cultura giuridica di Dante," in *Il pensiero politico di Dante*, vol. 2 (Milan: Alpes, 1928), 7–37; Arrigo Solmi, "Dante e il Diritto," in *Il pensiero politico di Dante: Studi storici* (Florence: La Voce, 1922), 212–52; Nicola Jaeger, "Il diritto al tempo di Dante," in *Dante nella critica d'oggi: Risultati e prospettive*, ed. Umberto Bosco (Florence: Le Monnier, 1965), 167–79; Sebastiano Vento, *Dante e il diritto pubblico italiano: Studio critico* (Milan: Sandron, 1923); Carlo Bozzi, *Dante e il diritto* (Turin: Internazionale, 1965); and James Williams, *Dante as Jurist* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1906).

110. See my *Dante as a Reformer*, passim; Charles Till Davis, "Dante's Vision of History," *Dante Studies* 93 (1975): 143–60, reprinted in *Dante's Italy and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), 23–41, and "Poverty and Eschatology in the *Commedia*," *Yearbook of Italian Studies* 4 (1980): 59–86, reprinted in *Dante's Italy*, 42–70; Joan Ferrante, *The Political Vision of the Divine Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); the three articles under the title "Why Did Dante Write the *Commedia*? Or the Vision Thing," by Teodolinda Barolini, Joan Ferrante, and Robert Hollander, *Dante Studies* 111 (1993): 1–25; and Jefferson B. Fletcher, "The Crux of Dante's *Comedy*," *Romanic Review* 16 (1925): 63–92.

111. J. F. Niermeyer and C. Van de Kieft, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), s.v. "dignitas," hereafter cited as *MLLM*; Adolph Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s., 43 (1953) (= Berger), 437.

112. Prue Shaw, Shaw translation, 80–83, translates *dignitas* as "privilege" and "honour."

113. *Mon.* 3.10.1, 2, and 4; 3.11.1.

114. See s.v. "dominium": *MLLM*, 463–64; Berger, 442; *Black's Law Dictionary*, 7th edition (St. Paul, Minn.: West, 1999). Janet Coleman, "Property and Poverty," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350–c. 1450*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 607–48, at 612 says that "Dominium in classical Roman law was an ultimate right . . . i.e., that which has no right behind it." W. W. Buckland and Arnold D. McNair, *Roman Law and Common Law: A Comparison in Outline*, 2nd ed. revised by F. H. Lawson (1952; repr. with corrections, 1965), 65–66, define *dominium* as "the ultimate right to the thing or, as it has been more paradoxically expressed, it is minimal residual right, what is left when all other rights vested in various people are taken out."

115. Ugo Nicolini, *La proprietà, il principe e l'espropriazione per pubblica utilità* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1940), 91 and 98. He cites in particular Justinian's statement that "omnia principis esse intelligentur"

(*Codex*, 7, 37, 3) and Antonius's description of himself as "mundi dominus, lex autem maris" (*Digesta*, 14, 2, 9).

116. Nicolini, *La proprietà*, 93.

117. According to Nicolini, *La proprietà*, 91, the question usually asked was "An princeps sit dominus rerum particularum?" The standard, negative answer provided the groundwork for subsequent discussion of the manner in which the emperor was *dominus mundi*. Property was always a critical issue, even when *dominium eminens* or *universale* was under discussion. Its significance is revealed by an anecdote concerning the Emperor Frederick I. As the story goes, Martinus and Bulgarus, two of Barbarossa's lawyers at the Diet of Roncaglia, were asked by the emperor "utrum de iure [imperator] esset dominus mundi?" Bulgarus unfortunately replied "quod non erat dominus quantum ad proprietatem." Martinus was rewarded by the gift of the emperor's own horse for his simple if ambiguous response "quod erat dominus." The story is told by Nicolini, 94, n. 3. The list of twelfth- and thirteenth-century civil lawyers and jurists who accepted a similar view of the emperor's role as *dominus mundi* is considerable; it includes, among others, Accursius, Odofredo, Buoncompagni, Jordan of Osnabruck, and Alberico da Rosate. On this see Nicolini, 93–102; R. W. and A. J. Carlyle, *A History of Mediaeval Political Theory in the West*, Vol. 5 (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1928), 141–46; and Walter Ullmann, "Sovereignty," 4–5. Among canon lawyers such an opinion was much more rare, but by no means altogether absent. For example, the Carlyles, 143, n. 1, quote the influential Hostiensis, who stated clearly that "Ipse [i.e., imperator] est mundi dominus, et omnes nationes sub eo sunt." According to Ullmann, "Sovereignty," 1–2 and 25–27, the papacy did not deny imperial superiority over the kingdoms until Clement V's *Pastoralis cura* was issued. See also M. H. Keen, "The Political Thought of the Fourteenth-Century Civilians," *Trends in Medieval Political Thought*, ed. Beryl Smalley (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 105–26.

118. Nicolini, *La proprietà*, 106.

119. Coleman, "Property and Poverty," 612; Buckland and McNair, *Roman Law and Common Law*, 65.

120. Berger, 601, s.v. "possessio," and 636, s.v. "nudus proprietat." The entry (Alessandro Nicolini) "proprietà," in *Enciclopedia dantesca*, deals with the philosophical question of the properties or qualities of things, not with land or possessions; nor is there an entry on *proprietà ecclesiastica* or *beni ecclesiastici*.

121. Berger, 441, says that *dominium* is "full legal power over a corporeal thing, the right of an owner to use it, to take proceeds therefrom, and to dispose of it freely"; it amounts to *plena potestas in re*.

122. S.v. "possessio": Berger, 636; *MLLM*, 1065; Ethelred Taunton, *The Law of the Church: A Cyclopaedia of Canon Law for English-Speaking Countries* (London: Kegan Paul, 1906), s.v. "alienation."

123. Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis* 2.2.6, "De potestate terrena," *PL* 176, 419b–419c: "Potestas terrena pertinet ad vitam terranam. Et omnia quae ad terrenam vitam spectant subjecta sunt terrenae potestati . . . possidentibus secundum iustitiam distribuat; et contra iniustitiam impugnantium defendat."

124. Berger, 636, s.v. "possessio."

125. *Corpus iuris civilis*, Vol. 1, *Digesta* 41:2:12:1, ed. Theodore Mommsen, 11th ed. (Berlin: Wiedmann, 1908), 699: "Nihil commune habet proprietat cum possessione: et ideo non denegatur ei interdictum uti possidetis, qui coepit rem vindicare: non enim videtur possessioni renuntiasse, quem rem vindicavit."

126. Charles W. Sloane, s.v. "Donation," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 12, ed. Charles G. Herbermann et al. (New York: Universal Knowledge Foundation, 1911), 116–17.

127. David Herlihy, "Church Property on the European Continent, 701–1200," *Speculum* 36 (1961): 81–100, provides percentages of land held by lay persons and ecclesiastics. When all of the ecclesiastical property is taken together the church was clearly the largest landowner for centuries. The percentage of land held by the church may have decreased after 1200, but the acreage must have gone up because of the fairly rapid process of bringing new land into ownership boundaries. In England, the permanent alienation of lay property to the church became such a large problem that provisions prohibiting *mortmain* (the passing of property into the "dead hand" of the church) were

embedded in the *Magna Carta* as early as 1215 and reinforced in the Statute of Mortmain in 1279. Henry Charles Lea, *The Dead Hand: A Brief Sketch of the Relations between Church and State with Regard to Ecclesiastical Property Rights and the Religious Orders* (Philadelphia: Dornan, 1900), 6.

128. Herlihy, "Church Property," table 3.

129. Taunton, *The Law of the Church*, s.v. "sponsalia."

130. Percy Ellwood Corbett's chapter on "Dowry," in *The Roman Law of Marriage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), 147–204.

131. Ibid. See also Maristella Botticini and Aloysius Siow, "Why Dowries?" published electronically by Computing in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto. Available at <http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~siow/papers/dowry.pdf>, 6–7.

132. Corbett, "Dowry," in *Marriage*, 179.

133. Taunton, *The Law of the Church*, s.v. "dowry."

134. S.v. "patrimonium": *MLLM*, 1010; Berger, 662.

135. We have seen that Dante would allow the emperor to delegate things to the church in *patrocinium* (*Mon.* 3.10.16). He uses the word *patrocinium* and its cognates three other times in the *Monarchia* and once in his letters. In *Monarchia* 3.13.7 he repeats the statement in 3.10.16 that "he could not legitimately have handed over to the church as a protectorate (*in patrocinium Ecclesie*) those things of the empire which he did hand over (*illa que de Imperio deputavi*)." In *Monarchia* 2.5.7 he quotes Cicero, *De Officiis* 2.8.26–27, to say that the Roman rule was better described as the "protection" (*patrocinium*) of the world as opposed to "domination" (*imperium*). In *Monarchia* 3.3.5 he points out that falsehood sometimes finds defenders (*falsitas patrocinium habeat*). In the letter to Henry VII (*Ep.* 7.4) he says that he (and presumably other just Italians) have "unceasingly prayed for the protection of a just king" (*patrocinia iusti regis incessanter implorabamus*).

136. S.v. "patrocinium": *MLLM*, 1010–11; Berger, 622.

137. Taunton, s.v. "collation," 207–8.

138. Ibid., s.v. "patrimony," 474–75, and "patronage," 475–83.

139. *Black's Law Dictionary*, s.v. "deputy." *Deputare* in law amounted to delegating certain authority and responsibility to a subordinate to act in behalf of and to be accountable to the officer or owner.

140. Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis* 2.2.7, "Quomodo Ecclesia terrena possident," *PL* 176, 420: "Sicut enim regia potestas *patrocinium* quod debet alteri non potest dare; sic ipsa possessio etiam ab ecclesiasticis personis obtenta, obsequium quod regiae potestati pro *patrocinio* debetur jure negare non potest. Sicut scriptum est: *Reddite quae sunt Caesaris Caesari, et quae sunt Dei Deo* [Matt. xxii]" (emphasis added). My thanks to Jennifer Ferriss-Hill of the University of Miami for help with the translation of his passage.

141. Note, however, that Hugh of St. Victor was a favorite of the hierocrats. In an earlier chapter of the *De sacramentis* 2.2.4, *PL* 176, 418, he states that "Nam spiritualis potestas terrenam potestatem et instituire habet, ut sit, et judicare habet si bona non fuerit."

142. The *Enciclopedia dantesca* does not contain an entry for "patrocinium." See Michele Barbi, *Problemi fondamentali per un nuovo commento della "Divina Commedia"* (Florence: Sansoni, 1956), 60–61. Cristaldi, "Il profetismo," 41, may be an exception; he says that "Il patrocinio imperiale non prevede a nessun patto trasferimento di sovranità; la supremazia statale rimane inviolata." Another writer who used *patrocinium* in relation to the Donation was Otto of Freising. Nardi, "La 'Donatio,'" 125, quotes this passage from his chronicle: "Verum imperii fautores Constantinum non regnum Romanis pontificibus hoc modo tradidisse, sed ipsos tanquam summi Dei sacerdotes ob Domini reverentiam in patris absumpsisse, ab eisque se ac successores suos benedicendos et *patrocinio* orationum fulciendos contendunt" (emphasis added). However, Nardi does not call attention to the crucial significance of the word, either here or on pp. 146–47, where he offers an argument similar to mine but hangs it on the word *patrimonium*. Pagliaro, "'Ahi Costantin,'" 281–89, says that Dante views the Donation as an award of usufruct—thus arriving at a position closer to Nardi's (and mine) than he would probably want to admit. To get there he offers a convoluted argument in which he rejects Nardi's view of the Donation as a dowry or a patrimony and insists on seeing it as a *donatio* and a renunciation. However, Dante never uses the word *donatio* for Constantine's largesse, and he

does not admit that the emperor renounced anything. Had Pagliaro understood the significance of the word *patrocinium* as a protectorate, he might not have wandered down this strange path.

143. Although he did not focus on the word *patrocinium* Bruno Nardi, "Intorno," 256–57, clearly understood that according to Dante "Constantino non rinunziò né intese di rinunziare alla sovranità imperiale né su Roma, né sul Patrimonio, né su altra parte dell'Impero; ma deputò a vantaggio della Chiesa alcuni territori, non perché questa li ritenesse di sua proprietà, ma perché ne dispensasse i proventi ai poveri di Cristo."

144. The concept of the pope and prelates as dispensers of resources for the good of the poor was founded on canon law; for example, Gratian, *Decretum*, Secunda Pars, Causa 12, q. 1, c. 23, *CICan* I, 684: "Episcopus ecclesiasticarum rerum habeat potestatem ad dispensandum erga omnes, qui indigent." The administrative functions of the bishops, in fact, were among their most widely acknowledged duties. However, to say that the bishops and the pope were dispensers of wealth did not, according to canon law, mean that the church could not own property. On the contrary, the law of the Church spoke clearly in favor of the church's right to possess temporal goods. See Gratian, *Decretum*, loc. cit., c. 13, *CICan*, I, 681, and c. 17, *CICan*, I, 683. On this question see Piero Rasi, "Il concetto di 'Res' nel 'Decretum Gratiani,'" *Studia Gratiana* 3 (1955): 143–58, and R. Naz, "Biens ecclésiastiques ou temporels," *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique* (Paris: Letouzey, 1937), 2:836–41.

145. Taunton, *The Law of the Church*, s.v. "donation," 305.

146. Davis, "Ecclesiastical Property," 297: "Presumably this clerical use was also precarious, and the emperor had the right to take back the good he had entrusted to them [i.e., the popes] whenever he pleased, and especially when he judged that his trust had been betrayed."

147. Justinian, *Institutes* 2.7, "De donationibus," §2, quoted by Nardi, "'Redeant unde venerunt,'" 411: "Sciendum tamen, quod etsi plenissimae sint donationes, si tamen *ingrati* existant homines, in quos beneficium collatum est, donatoribus *per nostram constitutionem* licentiam praestitimus *certis ex causis eas revocare* ne illi, qui suas res in alios contulerint, ab his quandam patiantur iniuriam vel iacturam, *secundum enumeratos in constitutione nostra modos*" (Nardi's italics, my translation).

148. Vinay edition (1950), 178, accepted *edeant* but failed to explain why he made this choice.

149. Barbi, *Problemi fondamentali*, 60–61.

150. *Redeant* is also found in Alessandro Torri's edition, *La Monarchia di Dante Alighieri col volgarizzamento di Marsilio Ficino*, ed. Alessandro Torri (Leghorn, 1844), 70, which was based on Marsilio Ficino's edition.

151. Pier Giorgio Ricci, *Monarchia* (Florence: Mondadori, 1965), 212–13 n. 12, says that *Redeant* is a capricious reading found only in two subordinate manuscripts.

152. Bruno Nardi, "'Redeant unde venerunt' (*Mon.*, II, x, 3)," *L'Alighieri* 6 (1965): 58–62, repr. in *Saggi e note di critica dantesca* (Milan: Ricciardi, 1966), 408–14. At 414 he objects to Ricci's reading as a case of "pura filologia" overriding the obvious meaning of the passage. *Redeunt*, he says, "non dà nessun senso. Proprio nessuno."

153. Shaw edition, 398; Shaw translation, 81. She explains her choice in her edition at 171, saying only of Ricci's choice that "Nardi's enegetic defense of the reading preferred by all modern editors is by contrast entirely persuasive." However, she must have changed her mind. In her article entitled "Sul testo della 'Monarchia,'" *Studi Danteschi* 53 (1981): 208, she says of Torri's and Nardi's editions, based on Ficino's *volgarizzamento*, that "sarebbe assurdo dare troppo peso a questa convergenza col Ficino." I would side with Nardi and ask what meaning the sentence could have with *redeunt*? Certainly none with regard to the Donation. There is every reason to respect the manuscript evidence presented by Ricci and others, but even so we may not stray far from Dante's intended meaning by reading the word in the present subjunctive. Robert Hollander, *Dante: A Life in Works* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 150, points out that the *Monarchia* was declared heretical and put to the flames in 1329. In view of this I would venture to suggest that the early scribes who made copies of Dante's treatise might have used *redeunt* instead of *redeant* to be cautious, and that as a result *redeant* is absent in the earliest manuscripts of the *stemma*.

154. Barbi, *Problemi fondamentali*, 60–61, speculates that once the providential restoration toward which Dante looked had been achieved, and once the superior role of the empire in temporal affairs

had been duly recognized, the *patrimonium* would have been restored to the church as a benefice for the poor.

155. Neither Bruno Nardi nor Antonio Pagliaro focused on the crucial word *patrocinium*; the lack of precision that Charles Davis notes in this context is not Dante's but theirs.

156. By the phrase "early commentators," I refer to Jacopo Alighieri (1322) through Cristoforo Landino (1481). This research was conducted with the invaluable aid of the Dante Dartmouth Project (DDP), where all bibliographical references may be found: <http://dante.dartmouth.edu/>.

157. Arnaldo D'Addario, s.v. "Alighieri, Pietro," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 2 (1960), available at [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bartolomeo-fiadoni_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bartolomeo-fiadoni_(Dizionario-Biografico))/. Pietro was not recorded as a student of law until 1327.

158. John A. Scott, "The Rock of Peter," 475. Scott references Luigi Rocca, *Di alcuni commenti della Divina Commedia composti nei primi vent'anni dopo la morte di Dante* (Florence: Sansoni, 1891), 391, and he goes beyond Rocca to explain Pietro's position in more detail.

159. Typical are the comments of Graziolo de' Bambaglioli (1324): "auctor reprehendit liberalitatem Constantini," and the Anonimo Fiorentino (1400[?]): "Dice l'Autore che Costantino imperatore è stato cagione del peccare de' prelati, per la dote grande ch'egli diede alla Chiesa" (DDP).

160. Jacopo della Lana, DDP, comment to *Purg.* 32.125–32, was the first of the early commentators to quote this common phrase, but he used *diffusum*. Pietro di Dante, DDP, comment to *Purg.* 32.109–29, used *infusum* instead, and he was followed by others. Thanks no doubt to his legal training Pietro refers to Gratian's *Decretum*, but of course the cry from Heaven does not appear there. His reference is to not to Gratian's chapter on the Donation of Constantine but to *Decretum*, Secunda Pars, Causa 12, Questio 1, c. 35, *CICan*, 1:699, a brief paragraph which says that clerics cannot alienate church property without the permission of their superiors; however, the entire Causa 12, *CICan*, 1:675–700, deals with the proper disposition of property legitimately owned by the church. According to Döllinger, *Fables*, 168, the earliest declaration of a cry from heaven at the Donation ("owê, owê, zem dritten wê . . .") appeared in a poem by Walther von der Vogelweide, written in 1198. The complete poem is in Mirbt, *Quellen*, 147 (no. 284). According to Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 156, the Latin cry "Hodie diffusum est venenum in ecclesia sancta Dei" appeared among the Waldensians. Duprè Theseider, *L'idea imperiale*, 224, prints the phrase as it appeared in Manfred's 1265 Manifesto to the Roman populace, and it was repeated by John of Paris in 1302–3, *De potestate regia et papali* 21, Leclercq edition, 245 (using *effusum* for *diffusum*), and by Remigio dei Girolami, *Contra falsos ecclesie professores*, in *Per lo studio di Fra Remigio dei Girolami* (†1319): *Contra falsos ecclesie professores* cc. 5–37, ed. Emilio Panella (Pistoia: Memorie Dominicane, 1979), 136 (cap. 26).

161. Johannes de Serravalle, comment to *Purg.* 32.124–26: "quam licet dederit Constantinus cum bona intentione, et sic Papa Silvester cum intentione [bona] receperat."

162. Ibid.: "non expedit quod Ecclesia perdat bona sua, iura et possessiones, atque dominium, ullo modo."

163. Comments by Jacopo della Lana, L'Ottimo Commento, and the Anonimo Fiorentino to *Par.* 20.55–60, DDP.

164. Hollander, *Life in Works*, 150.

165. Charles Till Davis, "Dante and Italian Nationalism," in *A Dante Symposium in Commemoration of the 700th Anniversary of the Poet's Birth (1265–1965)*, ed. William de Sua and Gino Rizzo (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 203–5.

166. See Stefano Jossa, "Politics vs. Literature: The Myth of Dante and the Italian National Identity," in *Dante and the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Aida Avdeh and Nick Haverly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 30–50.

167. Berardinelli's work appeared first in a series of articles in *Civiltà Cattolica* in 1865; these were revised and published as *Il dominio temporale dei papi nel concetto politico di Dante Alighieri* (Modena, 1881).

168. Including presumably such critics as Cesare Balbo, whom Davis, *Nationalism*, 205, calls a neo-Guelf.

169. Berardinelli, *Il dominio*, 5 and 12–13: “dimostrare apoditticamente, che Dante non escludeva per nulla dal suo sistema politico il dominio temporale e il principato civile de’ Papi.”
170. Davis, “Nationalism,” 209.
171. Giacomo Poletto, *Alcuni studi su Dante Allighieri* (Siena, 1892).
172. Alberto Buscaino Campo, *Dante e il potere temporale di’ papi* (Messina, 1893).
173. Francesco D’Ovidio, “La proprietà ecclesiastica secondo Dante e un luogo del *De Monarchia*,” in *Studii sulla Divina Commedia*, Parte II (Caserta: Moderna, 1931), 161; originally published in *Atti della Real Accademia di Scienze morali e politiche di Napoli* 29 (1897).
174. *Ibid.*, 165.
175. G. B. Siragusa, “La proprietà ecclesiastica secondo Dante,” *Giornale dantesco* 7 (1899): 294.
176. *Ibid.*, 295.
177. D’Ovidio, “La proprietà,” 174.
178. *Ibid.*, 170, 177.
179. Edward Moore, “Dante as a Religious Teacher,” *Studies in Dante: Second Series, Miscellaneous Essays* (Oxford, 1899), 1–78.
180. Moore, “Religious Teacher,” 16 and 18 n. 1.
181. Felice Tocco, “Questioni cronologiche intorno al *De Monarchia* di Dante,” *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana* 8 (1900–1901): 245.
182. Felice Tocco, *Quel che non c’è nella “Divina Commedia,” o Dante e l’eresia* (Bologna, 1899), 25.
183. Bruno Nardi, “La ‘Donatio,’” 109–59, reprinted from the 1942 issue of *Studi Danteschi*.
184. *Ibid.*, 147: “Il patrimonio di S. Pietro non è, per Dante, un dominio politico, ma una ‘dote’ a favore della chiesa e dei poveri di Cristo.”
185. Michele Maccarrone, “La teoria ierocratica e il canto XVI del Purgatorio,” *Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia* 4 (1950): 359–98; “Teologia e diritto canonico nella Monarchia, III, 3,” *Rivista della storia della chiesa in Italia* 7 (1952): 7–42; and “Il terzo libro della ‘Monarchia,’” *Studi Danteschi* 33 (1955): 5–142.
186. Bruno Nardi, “Intorno,” 151–313.
187. Ronald B. Herzman and William A. Stephany, “Dante and the Frescoes of Santi Quattro Coronati,” *Speculum* 87 (2012): 95–146.
188. Giorgio Petrocchi, *Vita di Dante* (Rome: Laterza, 1986), 78.
189. Dino Compagni, *La cronica di Dino Compagni delle cose occorrenti ne’ tempi suoi*, ed. Isidoro Del Lungo (Florence: Le Monnier, 1908), 112 (2.25), mentions Dante only once—when he lists the Whites exiled in April of 1302: “Dante Allighieri, che era ambasciadore a Roma”; Compagni, 86 (2.11), also says that two other ambassadors were sent on the mission in late September or early October 1301, and, at 71 (2.4) and n. 16, he says that Boniface VIII soon sent two of the three back, from which it is inferred that he retained Dante in Rome. On Dante’s embassy see Isidoro Del Lungo, *Dino Compagni e la sua Cronica*, vol. 3 (Florence, 1879), 210–27.
190. Compagni, 71 (2.4) and n. 16.
191. Charles Mitchell, “The Lateran Fresco of Boniface VIII,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 14 (1951): 2.
192. *Ibid.*, 1–6.
193. Mitchell, “The Lateran Fresco,” 1, says that “Boniface, as restorer of the Lateran, appeared firmly set in the line of Constantine, its founder, and deliberate stress was laid on the dominion which Constantine conferred on Sylvester.”
194. Gary Dickson, “The crowd at the feet of Pope Boniface VIII: pilgrimage, crusade and the first Roman Jubilee (1300),” *Journal of Medieval History* 25 (1999): 279–307.
195. Mitchell, “The Lateran Fresco,” 3.
196. Previous scholars have shed much light on the matter of Dante’s sources for Book 3 of the *Monarchia* and offered a wide array of earlier and contemporary texts, but none of the studies so far has taken this approach.
197. See especially Havely, *Dante and the Franciscans*, passim; Davis, “Poverty and Eschatology,” 42–70; and Park, *Dante as a Reformer*, 266–349.

198. Marjorie Reeves, "Dante and the Prophetic View of History," in *The World of Dante* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 55.
199. Marguerite Chiarenza, "Dante's Lady Poverty," *Dante Studies* 111 (1993): 154.
200. Rebecca S. Beal, "Bonaventure, Dante and the Apocalyptic Woman Clothed with the Sun," *Dante Studies* 114 (1996): 209–28, esp. 211; Edward Hagman, "Dante's Vision of God: The End of the *Itinerarium Mentis*," *Dante Studies* 106 (1988): 1–20.
201. Robert Davidsohn, *Storia di Firenze* (Florence: Sansoni, 1957), vol. 2, parte 2, 368, speaking of Ubertino, says "Non è quindi più che probabile che Dante, che aveva allora da 22 a 24 anni, lo abbia conosciuto, e avendolo udito predicare e discutere abbia poi da lui personalmente attinto parte di quei pensieri, che poi compaiono nella *Divina Commedia*?" Speaking of Ubertino, Olivi, and Dante, Davidsohn points out that "quei tre hanno vissuto per vario tempo vicini nella stessa città." Ubertino's biographer, Fredegand Callaey, *L'idéalisme franciscain spirituel au XIVe siècle: Étude sur Ubertino de Casale* (Louvain: Bureau du Recueil, 1911), 16, agreed with Davidsohn; so did Francesco Sarri, "Pier di Giovanni Olivi e Ubertino da Casale: Maestri di Teologia a Firenze (Sec. XIII)," *Studi francescani* 22 (1925): 88–125, at 115, and Davis, *Rome*, 227 and 242, who says "Dante may have known Olivi personally; certainly he is likely to have heard Ubertino's sermons at Santa Croce." However, Decima L. Douie, *The Nature and the Effect of the Heresy of the Fraticelli* (Manchester, 1932; repr., New York: AMS Press, 2009), 48 n. 2 and 120, disagreed on the grounds that she believed Dante's reference to Ubertino in *Par.* 12.124 to be derogatory. However, even if Dante meant the reference to be derogatory, that does not eliminate the possibility that Dante knew Ubertino personally.
202. The key works on this topic are Felice Tocco, *Lectura Dantis: Il Canto XXXII del Purgatorio* (Florence: Sansoni, 1902), who first suggested Dante's connection with Olivi; Michele Barbi, *Problemi fondamentali*, 39–42, who minimized Dante's Joachimism and the Spiritual Franciscan influence; Charles Till Davis, "Note B: Influence upon Dante of the Doctrines of the Joachites and Spiritual Franciscans," in *Rome*, 239–43; Raoul Manselli, "Ecclesia Spiritualis," 115–35 and "Dante e gli Spirituali francescani," *Lecture Classensi* 11 (1982): 47–61; and Cristaldi, "Il Profetismo," 7–65. It is clear by now that at the very least, Olivi's *Lectura super Apocalipsim* informed *Purgatorio* 32 and that Ubertino's *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu* contributed to the story of St. Francis in *Paradiso* 11. On the latter see Marguerite Chiarenza, "Dante's Lady Poverty," 153–75.
203. Joachim of Flora, *Liber de Concordia noui ac ueteris testamenti*, 4.1.3, ed. E. Randolph Daniel, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 73 (1983): 329: "Oportebat Romanum pontificem esse simul regem et sacerdotem." Cristaldi, "Il profetismo," 9.
204. Cristaldi, "Il profetismo," 10–13. He quotes passages to substantiate this position not only from Joachim's *Liber de Concordia*, but also from the *Tractatus super quatuor Evangelia* and the *Liber Figurarum*. See also Pietro De Leo, "L'età costantiniana nel pensiero di Gioacchino da Fiore," *Florentia* 1 (1987): 9–34.
205. Reeves, "The Prophetic View," 56–57.
206. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, *Opusculum XIII, Determinationis quaestionum* 1.2, *Opera Omnia* 8 (Quaracchi, 1898), 353.
207. Bonaventure, *Sermones 4 de S. Francisci*, in *Opera Omnia* 9, 585–90.
208. Bonaventure, *Collations on the Six Days*, 16th Collation, 18, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1970), 240 and 245; Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, trans. Zachary Hayes (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971), 21.
209. Malcom Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty: The Doctrine of the Absolute Poverty of Christ and the Apostles in the Franciscan Order, 1210–1323* (London: S.P.C.K., 1961), 66. Marci Bartoli, *Petrus Iohannis Olivi, Quaestiones de Romano Pontifice* (Grottaferrata: College of S. Bonaventura, 2001), 36, hereafter cited as Bartoli edition, says that the words *dominium*, *ius*, and *iurisdictio* are not to be found in any of the writings of Francis.
210. Lambert, *Poverty*, 86: "Fratres nichil sibi approprient nec domum nec locum nec aliquam rem."
211. Gregory IX, *Quo elongati* (September 30, 1230), *Bullarium Franciscanum*, ed. J. H. Sbaralea (Rome, 1759), 1:68–70: "Dicimus itaque, quod nec in communi, nec in speciali debeant proprietatem

habere; sed utensilium ac librorum, et eorum mobilium, quae licit habere, eorum usum habeant . . . salvo locorum et domorum *dominio* illis, ad quos noscitur pertinere" (emphasis added). See Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty*, 86.

212. Innocent IV in the bull *Ordinem vestrum* (November 14, 1245), *Bullarium Franciscanum* 1:400a–402b, speaking of the movable and immovable property of the Franciscans, says that "omnia in ius et proprietatem Beati Petri suscipimus." See also Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty*, 97 n. 3.

213. Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty*, 126–31.

214. Lambert translation, *Franciscan Poverty*, 139. Bonaventure, *Apologia pauperum* 11.9, *Opera Omnia* 8:313: "Patet igitur per haec verba legis expressa, neminem posse proprietatem sive dominium, immo nec possessionem acquirere, nisi vere, vel interpretative animum acquirendi habeat. Cum igitur Fratres Minores animum acquirendi non habeant, quin potius voluntatem contrarium, etiam si res corpore contingant; nec dominium nec possessionem acquirunt nec rerum huiusmodi possessores vel domini dici possunt."

215. *Ibid.*, 7.4, *Opera Omnia* 8:273; Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty*, 128, and compare *Monarchia* 3.10, 14.

216. *Apologia pauperum* 7.39, *Opera Omnia* 8:285; Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty*, 137. Nicholas III, in the bull *Exiit qui seminat* (August 14, 1279), *CICan*, 2:1109–21, repeated this explanation of Luke 22:35–36, but he used the term *proprietas* more frequently than *dominium* throughout.

217. *Apologia pauperum* 7.32, *Opera Omnia* 8:283: "Nequaquam est intelligendum, quod Apostoli proprium aliquid vel commune possederint, quia communitas illa non refertur ad Apostolos, sed at turbam"; Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty*, 137.

218. *Apologia pauperum* 7.5, *Opera Omnia* 8:273: "In his igitur verbis [i.e., Matt. 10:9], Dominus Apostolis et praedicatoribus veritatis extremae ac penuriosae paupertatis formam servandam imponit quantum ad carentiam non solum possessionum, sed etiam pecuniarum et aliorum mobilium."

219. *Ibid.*: "Hanc paupertatis normam tanquam speciali praeogativa perfectam et Christus in se ipso servavit et Apostolis servandam instituit, et his qui eorum cupiunt imitari vestigia, consulendo suasit."

220. In fact in the *Apologia pauperum* 7.36–39, *Opera Omnia* 8:284–85, Bonaventure lists several reasons why the church can have money.

221. *Ibid.*, 8.7, *Opera Omnia* 8:288: "Si enim possessiones Ecclesiae commendarent ut licitas, ut expedientes, ut perfectioni commensabiles in his qui communiter possident, et in eis qui sancte dispensant; viam sequeretur sacrorum doctorum et Canonum confutantium perversos haereticos, qui Ecclesiam Dei propter possessiones acceptas a statu iustitiae et perfectionis asserunt esse collapsam." Dante, in applying the Franciscan ideal of poverty to the whole Church, would certainly fall under Bonaventure's condemnation at this point.

222. See Epistolae 1 and 2 of the *Epistolae officiales*, *Opera Omnia*, 8:468–71.

223. See *Epistola de imitatione Christi*, *Opera Omnia*, 8:501; *Determinationes quaestionum circa regulam Fratrum Minorum*, Quaestio 24, *Opera Omnia*, 8:353–54; *Apologia pauperum* 7.3, *Opera Omnia*, 8:272–73; and *Expositio super regulam FF. Minorum*, 1:2 and 6:15, *Opera Omnia*, 8:393 and 422.

224. Raoul Manselli, "Spirituali francescani," 52.

225. Peter of John Olivi, *An papa habeat universalissimam potestatem*, Quaestio 18 in *Quodlibeta Petri Joan[n]is P[re]sidentis doctoris solennissimi Or. Minor[um]* (Venice: Lazarus de Suardis, 1505), ff. 8rb–9rb. This edition is extremely rare; ; Quaestio 18 is now available in the Bartoli edition, 171–79. Bartoli has edited this and several other writings of Olivi's on the papacy.

226. *Ibid.*, ¶33 (my references are to the paragraphs in the Venice edition, which I have numbered for this purpose), Bartoli edition, 178–79: "Quod quantumcumque terrenam postestatem Constantinus pape dederit ex ipsamet donatione constant quod potestas illa non sibi prius inerat ex sola Christi commissione seu ex sola potestate spirituali." The quodlibet is mentioned by Maccarrone, "Il terzo libro," 6–7, 67, 71, and 81, but he does not draw out the implications of what Olivi says about the Donation of Constantine.

227. *Ibid.*, Bartoli edition, 179: "Quod autem et quantum dederit non est nobis nunc cure, quia potestas temporalis sicut temporaliter est acquisibilis, sic et amissibilis et hoc multiplicibus modis."

228. Maccarrone, "Il terzo libro," 81, calls Olivi the "primo e più grande teologo antierocratico," but this claim is difficult to establish based on the documents in the Bartoli edition. While the overall thrust of *An papa* is toward detailing the limitations on papal power, it does not follow that Olivi can be accurately described as antierocratic.

229. Douie, *Fraticelli*, 111, n. 4.

230. Cristaldi, "Il profetismo," 28.

231. Davis, "Rome and Babylon," 31 and 39, n. 53.

232. Cristaldi, "Il profetismo," 28. Kevin Madigan, *Olivi and the Interpretation of Matthew in the High Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 83–84, points out that in his Commentary on Matthew, Olivi interprets Christ's instructions to the disciples to tell John the Baptist that "the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed," etc., as the seven ages (*status*) of the church, and that "the cleansing of the lepers symbolizes the healing of Constantine's leprosy and the expurgation of the idolatry of the gentiles in the third period."

233. Raoul Manselli, "Ecclesia Spiritualis," 133 n. 42, long ago pointed this out. He quotes from Olivi's *Lectura super Apocalipsim*: "Consimiliter autem pontificatus Christi fuit primo stirpi vite evangelice et apostolice in Petro et Apostolis datus ac deinde utiliter et rationabiliter fuit ad statum habentem temporalia commutatus, saltem a tempore Constantini usque ad finem quinti status." The passage may also be found in Warren Lewis, *Peter John Olivi, Prophet of the Year 2000: Ecclesiology and Eschatology in the "Lectura super Apocalipsim"* (Tübingen: University of Tübingen Dissertation, 1976), 2:51–52 (= Lewis edition; not seen by me).

234. Olivi, *An papa*, ¶19; Bartoli edition, 175: "Si enim papa ex absoluto iure evangelico et ex absoluta Christi commissione esset temporalis rex et dominus mundi, tunc Petro apostolorum principi non commisisset statum et consilium altissime paupertatis, sed potius summarum divitiarum et terrene temporalitatis, cuius oppositum patet ex textu, quia precepit eis dicens: *Nolite possidere aurum*, etc. [Matt. 10:9]." (I have here corrected Bartoli's use of *consilium* for *consilium*.)

235. Ibid.

236. Ibid., Bartoli edition, 176.

237. Brian Tierney, *Origins of Papal Infallibility 115–1350: A Study on the Concepts of Infallibility, Sovereignty and Tradition in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 104. Cristaldi, "Il profetismo," 27.

238. Peter of John Olivi, *Questio de usu paupere*, in *Petrus Ioannis Olivi, De usu paupere: The "Quaestio" and Tractatus* (Florence: Olschki, 1992), 64: "Preterea imaginemur quod omnes episcopi sic hodie quantum ad Christi consilia viverent sicut vivebant apostoli et maxime quantum ad paupertatem et quo ad eius pauperem usum." David Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: The Origins of the Usus Pauper Controversy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 23, alludes elsewhere to "Olivi's occasional tendency to offer Franciscan poverty as a pattern for the entire church." See also Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty*, 153 and n. 1, who says that Olivi here "comes close to saying that the observance of the *usus pauper* was essential to the office of any bishop."

239. Peter Olivi, *Quaestiones de perfectione evangelica*, Q. 8: *An status altissime paupertatis sit simpliciter melior omni statu divitiarum*, quoted by Cristaldi, "Il profetismo," 30 n. 41: "Usque ad sextum tempus ecclesiae . . . permiserunt in ecclesiis gentium ad opus ecclesiae possessiones ecclesiasticas habere." I have not been able to find evidence for Cristaldi's statement, "Dante, Il profetismo," 60, that "Dante raggiunge Olivi su [varie] punti . . . soprattutto la sua estensione [della *Nolite possidere*] alla Chiesa tutta."

240. Olivi, *Lectura super Apocalipsim*, quoted by Manselli, "Ecclesia Spiritualis," 133 n. 42 and Lewis edition, 51–52, goes on to say that in the sixth *status* the Church will again conform to Christ, leaving behind the many abuses of the fifth *status* which has almost made the church into a new Babylon: "Congruum est ergo quod in fine omnino redeat et assurgat ad ordinem primum, ad quem spectat iure promogeniture et perfectionis maioris et Christo conformioris. Ad iustum autem reditum valde, quamvis per accidens, cooperabitur non solum multiplex [imperfectio] in possessione et dispensatione temporalium ecclesie in pluribus comprobata, sed etiam multiplex enormitas superbie et luxurie et symoniarum et causidicationum [sic], litigiorum et fraudum et rapinarum ex ipsis occasionaliter accepta, ex quibus circa finem quinti temporis a planta pedis usque ad verticem est fere tota ecclesia infecta et confusa et quasi nova Babilon effecta."

241. Peter of John Olivi, *De perfectionibus Summi Pastoris*, Bartoli edition, 185–89.

242. Olivi, *An papa*, ¶21, Bartoli edition, 176; see also ¶23, Bartoli edition, 177. Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis* 2.2.7, PL 176, 419–420.

243. No link between Hugh of St. Victor and St. Bernard is apparent on this issue, although Olivi quotes both authors. Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione* 1.5, PL 182, 410, uses the word *patrocinium* only one time, and then not in reference to the Donation of Constantine. Hugh of St. Victor was a favorite of the hierocrats. The foundation of the “dualist” view was Pope Gelasius I’s letter to the Byzantine emperor Leo I, PL 54, 104, asserting that there are two powers in the world: “Duo quippe sunt, imperator auguste, quibus principaliter mundus hic regitur: auctoritas sacra pontificum, et regalis potestatis.” In the second part of the *De sacramentis*, which is entitled “De unitate ecclesiae,” at 2:4, PL 176, 418, Hugh alludes to this formulation, but instead of two powers he describes two lives: “Duae quippe vitae sunt: una terrena, altera coelestis; altera corporea, altera spiritualis.” He goes on to say that both *vitae* are within the church and that the authority to institute and judge the temporal power belongs to the spiritual power: “Nam spiritualis potestas terrenam potestatem et instituere habet, ut sit, et iudicare habet si bona non fuerit.” In the latter phrase we see the roots of Innocent III’s declaration that he had the right to intervene in secular affairs, *ratione peccati*. Olivi and Dante, however, appear to have been less interested in this passage than Hugh’s use of the word *patrocinium*, which they used to arrive at a different conclusion.

244. Ubertino da Casale, *Arbor vitae crucifixe Jesu* (Venice, 1485); facsimile reproduction with an Introduction by Charles Till Davis, *Monumenta Politica et Philosophica Rariora*, ser. 1, no. 4 (Turin: Bottega d’Erasmus, 1961), 5.1, 412b–413a. The converted gentiles, he says, were sometimes lost in darkness and idolatry “usque ad Constantium. Eius vero meridies fuit in preclarea doctrina et vita doctorum et anachoritarum.” This passage is also cited by Marino Damiata, *Pietà e storia nell’Arbor vite di Ubertino da Casale* (Florence: Studi francescani, 1988), 222 and n. 10. See also *Arbor vitae* 2.6, 123a and 5.1, 409b, where Constantine is not mentioned in connection with the third age.

245. *Arbor vitae* 5.1, 407a. In a later passage, at 409b, he neglects to mention Constantine when listing the ages of the church.

246. *Arbor vitae* 5.1, 412b–413a: “Declinatio vero huius solis fuit in quinto tempore.” H. Wayne Storey, “Canto XXXII: The Parallel Histories,” in *Lectura Dantis: Purgatorio*, ed. Allen Mandelbaum, Anthony Oldcorn, and Charles Ross (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 360–77, says that the Donation was “a document particularly suspect among the Spirituals,” but I have been unable to find evidence to suggest either that the Spirituals took a negative view of the Donation or that such a view influenced Dante.

247. Ubertino believed that the pope is married to the church, so that he can relinquish the office only by death or heresy. He who takes the place of the rightful pope commits adultery with the church and therefore becomes a whore. See Damiata, *Pietà e storia*, 279.

248. Damiata, *Pietà e storia*, 196.

249. “redite redite ad cor prevaricatores, attendite ad . . . Iesum paupertatis spiritum genitorem, et suos educatores veraces . . . et observatores eximium . . . Augustinum Dominicum Franciscum Bernardum Benedictum Basilium,” *Arbor vitae* 1.11, 64a.

250. Damiata, *Pietà e storia*, 197.

251. E. Randolph Daniel, “Spirituality and Poverty: Angelo da Clareno and Ubertino da Casale,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 4 (1973): 91.

252. For this story, see esp. Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty*, 184–207; and Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans*, 111–58.

253. *Enciclopedia dantesca*, s.v. “povertà” (Dabney Park). See also Davis, “Poverty and Eschatology,” 53: “In one important way, however, Dante seems more radical even than the Spiritual Franciscans. He thought that the clergy as a whole should have remained poor, and should have shunned all temporal jurisdiction from the time of Christ to the end of history.”

254. Park, “povertà,” 629.

255. Damiata, *Pietà e storia*, 198.

256. Olivi, *Lectura super Apocalipsim*, Lewis edition, 679. Apoc. 12:1. Beal, “The Apocalyptic Woman,” 209–28, argues that Dante identifies the *mulier amicta solis* not only with the Virgin but also with Beatrice, and he sees both as representing the church.

257. Olivi, *Lectura super Apocalipsim*, Lewis edition, 680. Unlike Olivi, Ubertino, *Arbor vitae*, 5.1, 413b, saw the two wings of the eagle as the anchorites Anthony and Athanasius.

258. "Romanus Princeps in aliquo romano Pontifici non subiaceat"; my translation. Maccarrone, "Il terzo libro," 6–7 and 67, referring to Olivi, *An papa*, says that Olivi advocated the *potestas indirecta* of the pope to intervene in temporal affairs, but only "Quantum spirituali salutis animarum et spirituali gubernatione totius ecclesie expediret" (§136, Bartoli edition, 179), a point which Dante seems to have ignored. Nardi, "Intorno," 168–69, criticized Maccarrone for making Olivi into more of a hierocrat than he actually was. One can agree with Nardi that Olivi's underlying theme in *An papa* was the apostolic model of the church, but it must also be said that Olivi was no great fan of the empire. In fact, in *An papa* he spends so few words on the empire and the kingdoms that his point is clearly more about the limitations on the pope's power than about the independent powers of the temporal authorities.

259. Brunetto Latini, *Li Livres dou Tresor*, ed. Spurgeon Baldwin and Paul Barrette (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003), 48–49 (no. 87): "Il doua la Sainte Eglise & li dona tout l'aperieral degnité que vos veés, que premierement n'avoit l'Eglise aucune chose"; my translation.

260. Charles Till Davis, *Medieval Italy: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Christopher Kleinhenz (New York: Routledge, 2004), s.v. "Remigio dei Girolami," says that this "theory remains unproved, but it has been widely accepted and is not improbable."

261. Remigio, *Contra falsos* 5–37, ed. Panella, *passim*. On Remigio see also Charles Till Davis, "An Early Florentine Political Theorist: Fra Remigio de' Girolami," *Proceedings of the American Philological Society* 104 (1960): 662–76.

262. Charles Till Davis, "Prefazione," in Remigio dei Girolami, *Contra falsos ecclesie professores*, ed. Filippo Tamburini, "Utrumque Ius" (Rome: Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1981), ix.

263. Remigio, *Contra falsos* 26, ed. Panella, 136.

264. *Ibid.*: "quia occupatio circa temporalia diminuit devotionem et amorem circa Deum et spiritualia; et ideo prefectus ecclesiasticus non debuit habere principale et directum dominium super temporalia."

265. *Contra falsos* 27, *ibid.*, 141: "Licet Christus fuerit dominus temporalium tamen noluit vicario suo pape committere istud dominium, ut scilicet / magis spiritualibus posset intendere . . . ergo papa non potest dici simpliciter vicarius Christi, ex quo non habet totum Christi dominium." However, Davis, "Prefazione," xvii, points out that Remigio later contradicted this point of view in sermon, where he says that the pope is universal in the sense that "he possesses all things."

266. *Contra falsos* 18, *ibid.*, 125: "Papa immediate habet auctoritatem suam a Deo; . . . Principes autem seculares habent auctoritatem scilicet a Deo mediante homine, etiam ipso papa."

267. *Contra falsos* 18, *ibid.*, 126–27: "Omnes christiani et tota ecclesia . . . sunt unum corpus . . . oportet quod istud corpus habeat [unum] caput . . . oportuit quod esset aliquod caput summum in terra corpori coniunctum. Hoc enim caput papa est."

268. Davis, "An Early Florentine," 675.

269. Davis, "Prefazione," xvi, says that the difficulty of determining the extent to which Remigio might have been a hierocrat lies in "a fundamental lack of coherence in his thought about the relationship between the two powers."

270. Hollander, "Dante and Cino," 201. Dante cites Cino numerous times in the *De vulgari eloquentia*. See also *Enciclopedia dantesca*, s.v. "Cino da Pistoia" (Mario Marti).

271. Lambert, *Heresy*, 53.

272. Lambert, *Heresy*, 156–57, and Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent c. 1250–1450* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), I, 9 and II, 457.

273. Lambert, *Heresy*, 53, and Leff, *Heresy*, I, 193.

274. Tierney, *Crisis*, 142, says that "during the preceding two centuries [before 1236] the Donation had played surprisingly little part in all the arguments and counterarguments about the temporal power of the papacy. Around 1054 Pope Leo IX made the last strong statement of the authority

conferred on the papacy by the Donation of Constantine in a letter to Michael, Patriarch of Constantinople, *PL* 143, 752–53, going so far as to say “sicut nostra est terrena imperialis potentia.”

275. Elizabeth Kennan, “The ‘De consideratione’ of St. Bernard of Clairvaux and the papacy in the Mid-Twelfth Century: A Review of Scholarship,” *Traditio* 23 (1967): 87.

276. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration: Advice to a Pope*, trans. John D. Anderson and Elizabeth T. Kennan, *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*, vol. 13 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1976), 117 (4.6) and 202 n. 4, hereafter cited as Anderson and Kennan translation; *De consideratione*, *PL* 182, 438.

277. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Declamationes de colloquio Simonis cum Jesu*, *PL* 184, 449–50; this language was pointed out by Vinay in his edition, 178–79 n. 1.

278. Speaking of the church’s possessions, Bernard, *De consideratione* 2.10–11, *PL* 182, 419, Anderson and Kennan translation, 58–59: “You may claim these things on some other ground but not by apostolic right. For the Apostle could not give you what he did not have. What he had he gave: responsibility for the churches, as I have said. Did he give dominion [*dominationem*]? . . . It is clear: dominion [*dominatus*] is forbidden for apostles. Therefore, go ahead and dare to usurp the apostolic office as lord [*dominans*], or as pope usurp dominion [*dominatum*]. Clearly, you are forbidden to do either.”

279. Joan Ferrante, *Political Vision*, 23 n. 42, points out that Dante cited the *De consideratione* in the letter to Cangrande, *Epistles* 10.28, Toynbee edition, 191, and that he used the letter in several chapters of the *Monarchia*.

280. Quoted by Brian Tierney, “The Continuity of Papal Political Theory in the Thirteenth Century: Some Methodological Considerations,” *Mediaeval Studies* 27 (1965): 241; *PL* 217, 481. Kenneth Pennington, “Pope Innocent III’s Views on Church and State: A Gloss to *Per venerabilem*,” in *Law, Church and Society Church, and Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 49–67; available at <http://faculty.cua.edu/pennington/Medieval%20papacy/InnocentPerVen.htm>, says at n. 38 that Innocent III was the first “to connect Melchisedech with the pope’s royal powers.” See also Brian Tierney, “‘Tria quippe distinguunt iudicia . . .’ A Note on Innocent III’s Decretal *Per venerabilem*,” *Speculum* 37 (1962): 48–59.

281. Pennington, “Pope Innocent III’s Views,” 9 (page numbering is from printout of the online source). See also Tierney, “‘Tria quippe,’” 48–59, who clarifies Innocent’s assertion of direct authority to act in temporal matters, stemming from the Melchisedech claim.

282. Pennington, “Innocent III’s Views,” 6–7; *Per venerabilem*, *PL* 214, 1132: “plenam in temporalibus gerimus potestatem, verum etiam in aliis regionibus, certis causis inspectis, temporalem jurisdictionem causaliter exercemus;” *Novit ille*, in *Selected Letters of Pope Innocent III concerning England (1198–1216)*, ed. C. R. Cheney and W. H. Semple (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1953), 64: “Non enim intendimus iudicare de feudo . . . sed decernere de peccato, cuius ad nos pertinet sine dubitatione censura quam in quemlibet exercere possumus et debemus.”

283. *PL* 214, 1130–34.

284. Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, 109.

285. Tierney, *Crisis*, 142. At 143–44, Tierney published an English translation of Gregory IX’s October 1236 letter to the Frederick II, trans. S. Z. Ehler and J. P. Morrall, *Church and State Through the Centuries* (London: Burns & Oates, 1954), 77. It is worth noting that Frederick II’s response to the deposition, a letter to the kings of Christendom in 1246 published in English by Tierney, *Crisis*, 145–46, accuses the contemporary clergy of abuses similar to those itemized by Dante and claims that they “should continue to the end as they were in the early days of the Church living an apostolic life and imitating the Lord’s humility,” and adds “that it was our intention especially to reduce those of highest rank to this condition.”

286. Johannes Fried, *The “Donation of Constantine” and “Constitutum Constantini,”* 26–27 and n. 77. For this hierocratic point of view see also Michael Wilks, *The Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages: The Papal Monarchy with Augustinus Triumphus and the Publicists* (Cambridge at the University Press, 1964), 543. If Dante had known about Innocent IV’s argument that the Donation was a restitution, one would expect him to counter this position in *Monarchia* 3.10, which he does not

do. This point adds further support to the suggestion made below that Dante was countering arguments made during the 1312–14 controversy.

287. *Clericis laicos* and *Unam sanctam* may be found in Mirbt, *Quellen*, 161–64 (nos. 807 and 809). On these bulls, see T. S. R. Boase, *Boniface VIII* (London: Constable, 1933), 138–42 and 317–24, respectively.

288. Matthew of Acquasparta's sermon is published in *Sermones de S. Francisco de S. Antonio et de S. Clara*, ed. Gedeon Gál (Quaracchi: College of St. Bonaventure, 1962), 176–90. Gál, 14*, supplies the date and the setting. Matthew's sermon is also printed along with Boniface's remarks in Pierre Dupuy, *Histoire du différend d'entre le pape Boniface VIII, et Philippes le Bel roy de France* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1655), 73–79.

289. Charles Till Davis, "Roman Patriotism and Republican Propaganda: Ptolemy of Lucca and Pope Nicholas III," *Speculum* 50 (1975): 411–33; reprinted in *Dante's Italy*, 224–53, at 225. Davis says that the *Determinatio* was written in 1278, but more the recent testimony of Ludwig Schmugge, s.v. "Fiadoni, Bartolomeo (Tolomeo, Ptolomeo da Lucca)," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, available at [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bartolomeo-fiadoni_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bartolomeo-fiadoni_(Dizionario_Biografico)), accessed on 12/24/12, dates it "intorno al 1300."

290. John of Paris, *De potestate regia et papali*, Leclercq edition; English translation by J. A. Watt, *John of Paris: On Royal and Papal Power* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1971), hereafter cited as Watt translation. On John of Paris see also Carlo Cipolla, "Dante e Giovanni da Parigi," *Memorie della R. Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, 2nd ser., 42 (1892): 325–419, reprinted as *Il trattato "De Monarchia" di Dante Alighieri e l'opuscolo "De potestate regia et papali" di Giovanni da Parigi* (Turin: Clausen, 1982), and Jean Rivière, *Le problème de l'église et de l'état au temps de Philippe le Bel: Étude de théologie positive* (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1926), 281–300.

291. Watt translation, 220–28, and Leclercq edition, 243–47, and *passim*.

292. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale* 13.56.

293. Leclercq edition, 245 n. 7, cites a *Légende inédite de la vie di S. Silvestre*, but I have not been able to find this phrase in any of the versions of Sylvester's life.

294. Watt translation, 224–25 and Leclercq edition, 246.

295. Watt translation, 96–97 and Leclercq edition, 186.

296. Cipolla, "Dante and Giovanni da Parigi," 387; Rivière, *Le problème*, 333, n. 1, agrees with Cipolla that Dante may not have been familiar with John's treatise.

297. Chapter 11; Watt translation, 96–97 and Leclercq edition, 186. The answers are found in the chapters 14–20.

298. Watt translation, 149; Leclercq edition, 211. Puletti, "La Donazione," 113–35, devotes most of her article to pointing out the similarities between John of Paris and Dante, saying at 126 that "gli argomenti che Dante utilizza sono più o meno gli stessi di Giovanni da Parigi," but she completely neglects their differences.

299. Watt translation, 69–70; Leclercq edition, 173: "Nam error Valdensium fuit successoribus apostolorum scilicet pape et prelati ecclesiasticis repugnare dominium in temporalibus nec eis licere habere divitias temporales." Dante of course avoided the second and third errors of the Waldensians (according to John) of declaring that the Roman Church was no longer the Church of God and that the true church was restored by themselves.

300. Domenico Maffei, "Il pensiero di Cino da Pistoia sulla Donazione di Costantino, le sue due fonti e il dissenso finale da Dante," *Lecture Classensi* 16 (1987): 119–27.

301. Maffei, "Il pensiero di Cino," 120.

302. *Ibid.*

303. Cino da Pistoia, *Lectura super Codice*, 1. Comperit, c. De praescriptione, XXX vel XL annorum (c. 7, 39, 6), Nos. 1–2 (Frankfurt: Sigismundi, 1578), f. 448r; quoted and dated by Domenico Maffei, "Cino da Pistoia e il 'Constitutum Constantini,'" *Annali della Università di Macerata* 24 (1960): 96–97: "Ratio est, quia expedit Reipublicae per unum consuli et per unum gubernari, et ideo de pluribus gubernatoribus in unum solum translatus est ius imperii . . . quia est mundi dominus . . . quia pro toto orbe terrarum die noctuque vigilat."

304. Maffei, "Il pensiero di Cino," 123.

305. Cino, *Lectura super Codice*: "Et ideo signa subiectionis suae non possunt praescribi, unde est contra illos, qui dicunt Romanam ecclesiam praescripisse sibi donationem factam ab Imperatore Constantino, quod saltem subiectionis signa non potuerit praescribere, et sic nec iurisdictionem Romani imperii, cui subiectus est totus orbis."

306. Domenico Maffei, *La donazione di Costantino nei giuristi medievali* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1964), 141.

307. *Ibid.*, 140.

308. Toynbee edition, 42–62.

309. Dante's statement in the letter to Henry VII (April 17, 1311), *Ep.* 7.2, Toynbee edition, 101, that "I too, who write as well for myself as for others, beheld thee most gracious, and heard thee most clement, as beseems Imperial Majesty, when my hands touched thy feet, and my lips paid their tribute" has been taken by many as evidence that Dante was present at the coronation in Milan. See Paget Toynbee, *Dante Alighieri: His Life and Works*, ed. Charles S. Singleton (New York: Harper, 1965; originally published in 1900), and Petrocchi, *Vita*, 148.

310. On this conflict see Davis, *Rome*, 146–94, and appendix 2, "Clement V and the Dante of the Monarchia," 263–69; William Bowsky, *Henry VII in Italy: The Conflict of Empire and City-State, 1310–1313* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960), *passim*, and "Clement V and the Emperor-elect," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 12 (1958): 52–69; Kenneth Pennington, *The Prince and the Law, 1200–1600: Sovereignty and Rights in the Western Legal Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), chapter V: "Henry VII and Robert of Naples," 165–201; and Egidio Gorra, "Dante e Clemente V," *Giornale storico della letteratura Italiana*, 59 (1917): 193–216.

311. Davis, *Rome*, 147.

312. Clement V, *Exultet in gloria*, in *Acta Henrici VII Romanorum Imperatoris et Monumenta Quaedam Alia*, ed. Francisco Bonainio, Pars Prima (Florence: Cellinii, 1877), No. 26, pp. 42–45. The Toynbee edition of the letters, 45 n. 2, quotes the latter phrase: "Regem praedictum [i.e., Henry] honorificentia debita venerari."

313. Davis, *Rome*, 153.

314. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum*, vol. 4 (1298–1313), ed. Jakob Schwalm (Hannover: Hahn, 1909–1911), 1:395–98 (no. 454); hereafter cited as MGH Schwalm.

315. Davis, *Rome*, 269.

316. *Par.* 17.82: "ma pria che 'l Guasco [i.e., Clement] l'alto Arrigo inganni." Some scholars have dated the "betrayal" of Henry to March 28, 1312, when Clement made the decision not to dispatch orders to Robert's troops to allow Henry to enter Rome without opposition. However, Dante could not have seen these orders because they remained sealed. We know of them from secret dispatches sent by the agents of James II of Aragon at Vienne, published in MGH Schwalm, 2:1423–26 (no. 1288). On this episode see Bowsky, *Henry VII*, 67.

317. Kern, *Acta imperii*, June 19, 1312, 150–51 (no. 227).

318. The cardinals' document is lost; we know of its contents from Henry's response, entitled *Responsiones cardinalibus factae* (August 6, 1312), MGH Schwalm, 2:844–47 (no. 841).

319. Pennington, *The Prince*, 169.

320. Davis, *Rome*, 157; MGH Schwalm, 2:823–25 (nos. 821 and 822). Henry had actually opened these negotiations in April of 1312—an act virtually contemporaneous with Clement's "inganno," and one which the pope would most likely have seen as a betrayal of the papacy.

321. Pennington, *The Prince*, 183.

322. Davis, *Rome*, 144, says that "In the city of Rome itself we shall perhaps find the focal point of the whole controversy, . . . in the prominence of the question of the Donation in almost all of the controversial writings."

323. Toynbee edition, 42–105. On these letters see Pertile, "Dante Looks Forward and Back," 1–17.

324. Petrocchi, *Vita*, 154; Hollander, s.v. "Dante Alighieri," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph R. Strayer (New York: Scribner's, 1984), 4:103.

325. *Promissio Lausannensis* (October 11, 1310), MGH Schwalm, 1:397 (no. 454): “Ius ac possessionem [sic] et proprietatem ipsorum cum omni plenitudine [sic] recognoscimus iure plenissimo ad ius et proprietatem sancte Romane ecclesie spectare ac omnimode pertinere, ac ipsas omnes terras atque provincias de novo avoamus [sic], innovamus atque concedimus, quitamus libere et dimittimus, restituiamus et renunciamus.”

326. Interestingly Dante does not use this phrase to describe the emperor as monarch.

327. *Littera encyclica imperatoris* (June 29, 1312), MGH Schwalm, 2:801–4 (no. 801).

328. *Constitutio contra haereticos et sacrilegos* (29 June 1312), MGH Schwalm, 2:799–800 (no. 799): “Romane ecclesie, qua dive memorie Constantinus noster inclitus predecessor Romanum munivit et auxit imperium, cunctosque populos nostro subiectos imperio, nostre dicioni subditos in ista volumemus religione versari.”

329. *Iuramentum imperatoris* (July 6, 1312), MGH Schwalm, 2:807–809 (no. 807).

330. *Responsiones cardinalibus factae* (August 6, 1312), MGH Schwalm, 2:844–47 (no. 841). It would seem that Henry was as capable as Clement of applying a “double standard.” See Bowsky, “Clement V,” 66.

331. See Pennington, “The Prince,” 165–201, for a full discussion of the legal issues involved.

332. Dated by Maffei, “Il pensiero di Cino,” 121 and “Cino da Pistoia,” 95.

333. A third document, *Consilium iudicis aulae imperialis super rebellibus* (before May 1, 1313), MGH Schwalm, 2:1015–17 (no. 981), written by one Milancius, an imperial judge, argues that Venice is subject to the empire and that Bologna is not a possession of the church, without reference to the Donation of Constantine.

334. *De principio et origine et potencia imperatoris et pape*, in *Nova Alamanniae: Urkunden, Briefe und andere Quellen besonders zur deutschen Geschichte des 14. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Edmund E. Stengel, vol. 1 (Berlin: Wiedmannsche, 1921), 44–52 (no. 90): “licet et imperator sit caput ecclesie generaliter appellatus, ut in legenda beati Silvestri legitur” (47) and “dominus est omnium terrenorum (ut legitur in legenda beati Silvestri)” (49).

335. *Memoriale imperatori porrectum* (between April 26 and 24 August 24, 1313), MGH Schwalm, 2:1308–17 (no. 1248). See Davis, *Rome*, 178–80.

336. Bowsky, *Henry VII*, 263, n. 28.

337. *Memoriale imperatori porrectum*, 1314.

338. *Ibid.*, 1315.

339. *Ibid.*, 1316–17; Davis, *Rome*, 179.

340. MGH Schwalm, 2: 1317–62 (nos. 1249–1251).

341. *Memoriale pontifici contra imperatorem tradita*, *Disquisitio prior iuridica*, MGH Schwalm, 2:1330–32 (no. 1250).

342. *Ibid.*, 1331: “Imperator non potest dici princeps in terris ecclesie, que ab eius potestate omnimoda sunt exempta”; and 1338: “Romanum imperium habet fines et limites suos. Alioquin quomodo lex distingueret populos quosdam esse sub imperio, quosdam sub regibus suis, quosdam nec sub imperio nec sub regibus, sed per se liberos esse”; see also 1339, where the Donation is mentioned in this context.

343. *Tractatus de Jurisdictione Ecclesiae super Regnum Apuliae, & Siciliae*, in *Tutelensis Miscellanea novo ordine digesta*, ed. Etienne Baluze and Giovan Domenico Mansi (Lucca, 1761–1764), I, 468–73. This treatise is ascribed to a Cardinal Nicholas “Aragonii.” He can be identified either with Cardinal Nicholas of Prato or Cardinal Nicholas de Fréauville, both Dominicans, because they were the only two cardinals named Nicholas living in 1312–14, although neither appears to have had ties to Aragon. See Salvador Miranda’s website entitled “The Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church,” at <http://www2.fiu.edu/~mirandas/cardinals.htm>.

344. Davis, *Rome*, 143 and 166.

345. *Traktat über die Ungültigkeit der Sentenz K. Heinrichs VII. gegen K. Robert von Neapel*, in *Acta imperii Angliae et Franciae ab anno 1267 ad annum 1313: Dokumente vornehmlich zur Geschichte der auswärtigen Beziehungen Deutschlands in ausländischen Archiven*, ed. Fritz Kern (Tübingen: Mohr, 1911), No. 295, pp. 244–47. See Davis, *Rome*, 184–85.

346. *Traktat*, 244–45.

347. Ibid., 246: "Sed hodie satis est apertum videre, quod dominium habet in mundo tot regibus et principibus, tot marchionibus, tot comitibus et aliis baronibus et comunitatibus per universum orbem . . . dominia et iura earundem dignitatem suarum habentibus et possidentibus per se ipsos . . . sed hodie bene videtur in aperto . . . [quod] rex Francie, rex Sicilie, rex Ispanie, rex Aragonie, rex Anglie, rex Portugallie, rex Armenie, rex Ungarie, rex Cipri . . . nec sibi subiciunt nec obediunt."

348. Ibid., 247 (emphasis added): "Ex predictis patet, quod loquendo moderno tempore de potestate et auctoritate imperatoris est quodammodo sermo abusivus, quoniam ipse omnia habere dicitur et quasi nichil possidet et vocatur imperator Romanorum, tamen nullum dominium, imperium, potestatem aut iurisdictionem in Romanos habeat nihilque ibi corporale aut incorporale possideat ratione predictae abdicationis et donationis Constantini . . . Nimirum itaque, ex quo sic brevium est dominium imperatoris, eiusdem diminuta auctoritas, restricta potestas, imperium et iurdictio mutilata."

349. *Romani principes*, Clementarium, Lib. II, Tit. IX, *CICan*, 2:1147–50.

350. *Pastoralis cura*, Tit. XI, II, 1151–53 a 1152–53: "Nullatenus omittamus, quod regem, extra districtum imperii, in regno scilicet Sicilie . . . citare non potuit imperator . . . nos tam ex superioritate, quam ad imperium non est dubium nos habere, quam ex potestate, in qua vacante imperio imperatori succedimus, et nihilominus ex illius plenitudine potestatis, quam Christus Rex regum et Dominus Dominantium nobis, licet immeritis, in persona beati Petri concessit."

351. Nicola Zinagrelli, *La vita, i tempi e le opere di Dante*, Storia Letteraria d'Italia (Milan: Vallardi, 1947), 2:683–84. John XII, *Si fratrum*, Constitutiones 20, Ioannis Papae XXII, Titulus 5, *CICan*, 2:1211; English translation by Cassell, *The "Monarchia Controversy"*, 198–201.

352. For lists of scholars who accept 1318 for the date of the *Monarchia* see Cassell, *The "Monarchia" Controversy*, 203–204 n. 1, and Enrico Fenzi, "È la 'Monarchia' l'ultima opera di Dante? (A proposito di una recent edition)," *Studi Danteschi* 72 (2007): 215–22 nn. 1–12; Fenzi's article is essentially a long review of Dante, *Monarchia*; Cola di Rienzo, *Commentario*; Marsiglio Ficino, *Volgarizzamento*, ed. Francesco Furlan (Milan: Mondadori, 2004). Neither Cassell, Fenzi, nor Furlan deals with the important contribution by Davis, "Clement V," in *Rome*, 263–69, and consequently they do not address the arguments he makes for the 1312–14 date of the *Monarchia*.

353. Davis, "Clement V," in *Rome*, 265.

354. Hollander, "Dante and Cino," 218; at 230 n. 100, he cites Gerolamo Biscaro, "Cino da Pistoia and Dante," *Studi medievali* 1 (1928): 496–97.

355. Maffei, "Il pensiero," 124.

356. Ibid.

357. See *Enciclopedia dantesca*, s.v. "Cino da Pistoia" (Mario Marti).

358. Hollander, "Dante and Cino," 219.

359. Guido Vernani, *De Reprobatione Falsae Monarchiae*, ed. Nevio Matteini, *Il più antico oppositore di Dante: Guido Vernani da Rimini* (Padua: CEDAM, 1958), 91–118; English trans. Cassell, *The "Monarchia" Controversy*, 174–97.

360. Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Life of Dante*, trans. Philip H. Wicksteed (London: Moring, 1904), 97–98, tells us that when Ludwig of Bavaria had himself crowned Holy Roman emperor against Pope John XXII's wishes, he and his supporters found a copy of the *Monarchia* and used it to defend the coronation on the grounds that the book said that the emperor's authority comes directly from God. This act made the book famous. After Ludwig returned to Germany, Cardinal Bertrand "seized the aforesaid book, and condemned it publicly to the flames, as containing heresies." He also wanted to exhume and burn Dante's bones but was persuaded against doing so. The veracity of the story is confirmed by Bartolo da Sassoferrato, who, without naming the cardinal, says that after his death Dante was almost damned for heresy. See also Corrado Ricci, *L'ultimo rifugio di Dante Alighieri* (Milan, 1891), 187–94; and Lisetta Ciaccio, *Il Cardinal Legato Bertrando del Poggetto (1327–34)* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1905), 75.

361. John XXII, *Cum inter nonnullos* (November 13, 1323), in *Bullarium Franciscanum* 5:256–59; English translation by Lambert, *Poverty*, 235–36. In a subsequent essay I intend to argue that Dante's endorsement of the poverty of Christ and the apostles amounted to views (both in the *Commedia* and the *Monarchia*) that were declared heretical by John XXII in 1323, and that the poet had no intention

to condemn Ubertino da Casale for excessive rigor or radicalism. Dante was in fact more radical than Ubertino by applying the Franciscan ideal of poverty to the whole church. Ubertino could no longer be counted among the pages (members) in the volume of the Franciscan order because he left the order to become a Benedictine in 1317.

362. Southern, *Western Society*, esp. chap. 4, "The papacy," 90–169.

363. Pertile, "Dante Looks Forward and Back," 13: "The dream Dante was intent on pursuing was not only unrealistic but, to use a modern term, much more reactionary." However, Davis, *Rome*, 186, in commenting on the *Monarchia* cautions that "Dante's treatise is by no means the anachronistic, isolated, and completely theoretical work that it is sometimes called," because it addressed issues that were vigorously debated at the time (1312–14). Pier Giorgio Ricci, "Dante e l'Impero di Roma," in *Dante e Roma*, 144–45, describes Dante's imperial vision as "di pienissima realtà . . . Non d'utopia si deve dunque parlare nel caso di Dante, ma anzi di realismo conservatore." A. P. d'Entrèves, *Dante as a Political Thinker* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 24, and Rivière, *Le problème*, 340, agree.

364. Hollander and Hollander, *Par.* 27.86. Dante uses *areola* in *Monarchia* 3.16.11 and *aiuola* in *Paradiso* 22.151. I am indebted to John Scott, *Understanding Dante*, 371 n. 22, for pointing out that the common (and incorrect) translation for these words is "threshing-floor."

365. Edward Twining, *A History of the Crown Jewels of Europe* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1960), 377–79. See also Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, *Bonifacio VIII* (Turin: Einaudi, 2003), 223–25: "Le tre corone simboleggerebbero dunque l'universalità del potere pontificio, il *dominium* sul mondo (la superiorità del papa sui re e sull'imperatore) e la sovranità sacerdotale" (225); Mitchell, "The Lateran Fresco," 2–3; and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, *Le Chiavi e la Tiara: Immagini e simboli del papato medievale* (Rome: Viella, 2005).

366. A full articulation of the idea of sovereignty did not develop until somewhat later, so exception may be taken to Shaw's use of this word, but the sense would remain the same if one were to delete it. See Ullmann, "Sovereignty," 1–33, *passim*.

367. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* 4.1; 1120a:14–15. Aristotle mentions the disposition of the giver but not of the recipient. St. Thomas Aquinas in his commentary on the *Nichomachean Ethics*, *Sententia libri ethicorum* 4.1.13, *Opera Omnia* 4 (Stuttgart: Frommann Holzboog, 1980), 173, stretches Aristotle's meaning to include the person receiving the gift: "manifestum est autem quoniam ex eo quod aliquis dat, benefacit et bene operatur; ad sumptionem autem, idest receptionem pertinet bene pati, inquantum scilicet aliquis recipit unde oportet, vel non turpe operari, inquantum scilicet non recipit unde non oportet."

The “*Vicinia*” and Its Role in Dante’s Political Thought

MARIA LUISA ARDIZZONE

Early in Book 4 of the *Convivio*, a work that Dante wrote in Italian in the first years of his exile and conceived as a commentary on a few *canzoni* composed when he was still living in Florence, the poet introduced a word taken from the Latin *vicinia* and inserted it in his Italian text. This word reappears in his *Monarchia*,¹ his political treatise in Latin written after the *Convivio*, perhaps during the years 1314–18, close to the time when he was composing the *Paradiso*. Both passages in the *Convivio* derive from Aristotle’s *Politics*, which Dante would have taken from either a Latin translation of the work or one of its Latin commentaries. A discourse on Dante’s introduction of *vicinia* has so far never been proposed.

The word itself, in the form used by Dante, is highly uncertain. According to the Parodi-Pellegrini edition of 1921, the word connoted a *vicinanza*, signifying closeness (as in the English word “vicinity”). Vasoli, commenting in his revised edition of *Convivio*, thinks that Dante did not use the Latin *vicinia* but rather its vernacular form *vicinanza*, which he argues is synonymous with *vicus*.² In her critical edition of 1966, Maria Simonelli drew attention to the fact that there exists a *lectio difficilior* that reads *vicinia* and a *lectio faciliior* that reads *vicinanza*. She transcribes the term *vicinanza* and informs readers that in the original, the word is *vicinia*, and that this Latinism can be defended because of its affinity to *vicinie* in the *Monarchia*.³ The Vandelli and Busnelli edition reads *vicinanza*,⁴ as does Ageno Brambilla’s critical edition of 1995. She observes, however, that the archetype has *vicinia*, and that it would probably be more correct to

replace *vicinanza* with *vicinia*.⁵ Giorgio Inglese retains Simonelli's preference for *vicinanza* in his edition of 1993.⁶

I will begin by quoting several passages of Dante's *Convivio* in which we find the word *vicinanza*. Dante introduces *vicinia* as part of the social aggregation that human beings need in order to have a happy life. Because man is a social animal, he first needs a family, then a *vicinanza* (*vicinia*), and beyond that a city. The highest form of community rests with the empire.

Lo fondamento radicale della imperiale maiestade, secondo lo vero, è la necessità della umana civiltade, che a uno fine è ordinata, cioè a vita felice; alla quale nullo per sé è sufficiente a venire senza l'aiutorio d'alcuno, con ciò sia cosa che l'uomo abisogna di molte cose, alle quali uno solo soddisfare non può. E però dice lo Filosofo che l'uomo naturalmente è compagnevole animale.

E sì come un uomo a sua sufficienza richiede compagnia domestica di famiglia, così una casa a sua sufficienza richiede una *vicinanza* (*vicinia*): altrimenti molti difetti sosterrebbe che sarebbero impedimento di felicitade. E però che una *vicinanza* [a] sé non può in tutto soddisfare, conviene a satisfacimento di quella essere la cittade. Ancora la cittade richiede alle sue arti e alle sue difensioni vicenda avere e fratellanza colle circavicine cittadi; e però fu fatto lo regno. Onde, con ciò sia cosa che l'animo umano in terminata possessione di terra non si queti, ma sempre desideri gloria d'acquistare, sì come per esperienza vedemo, discordie e guerre conviene sorgere intra regno e regno, le quali sono tribulazioni delle cittadi, e per le cittadi delle *vicinie*, e per le *vicinie* delle case [e per le case] dell'uomo; e così s'impedisce la felicitade.

Il perché, a queste guerre e alle loro cagioni tòrre via, conviene di necessitade tutta la terra, e quanto all'umana generazione a possedere è dato, essere Monarchia, cioè uno solo principato, e uno prencipe avere; lo quale, tutto possedendo e più desiderare non possendo, li regi tegna contenti nelli termini delli regni, sì che pace intra loro sia, nella quale si posino le cittadi, e in questa posa le *vicinie* s'amino, [e] in questo amore le case prendano ogni loro bisogno, lo qual preso, l'uomo viva felicemente: che è quello per che esso è nato.

(*Conv.* 4.4.1–4; emphasis added)

The root foundation underlying the Imperial Majesty is, in truth, man's need for human society, which is established for a single end: namely, a life of happiness, which no one is able to attain by himself without the aid of someone else, since one has need of many things which no single individual is able to provide. Therefore the Philosopher says that man is by nature a social animal.

And just as for his well-being an individual requires the domestic companionship provided by family, so for its well-being a household requires a community (*vicinia*), for otherwise it would suffer many defects that would hinder happiness. And

since a community (*vicinia*) could not provide for its own wellbeing completely by itself, it is necessary for this wellbeing that there be a city. Moreover, a city requires for the sake of its culture and its defense mutual relations and brotherhood with the surrounding cities, and for this reason kingdoms were created. Since the human mind does not rest content with limited possession of land but always seeks to achieve glory through further conquest, as we see from experience, discord and war must spring up between one kingdom and another. Such things are the tribulations of cities, of the surrounding cities, of the communities, and of the households of individuals; and so happiness is hindered.

Consequently, in order to do away with these wars and their causes, it is necessary that the whole earth, and all that is given to the human race to possess, should be a Monarchy—that is, a single principality, having one prince who, possessing all things and being unable to desire anything else, would keep the kings content within the boundaries of their kingdoms and preserve among them the peace in which the cities might rest. Through this peace the communities would come to love one another, and by this love all households would provide for their needs, which when provided would bring man happiness, for this is the end for which he is born.⁷

Commentators agree that the meaning of the word should be read in light of the *Monarchia*, where Dante seems to refer to Aristotle's *Politics*. According to this reference, *vicinia* is a translation from the Greek κóμη (*kome*), meaning "village," which is synonymous with *vicus*, its Latin correlate.⁸

In *Monarchia* 1.3.2 and 3.1.5, Dante introduces two Latin words in order to indicate a small community, *vicus* and *vicinia*. Nardi discusses both in his edition of the *Monarchia*, noting that each derives from Aristotle's *Politics*. He reads *vicus* as a translation of Aristotle's *kome*, a village or small community of households. Moreover, he points out that Moerbeke had used the term *vicinia* [*sic*] in his translation of the Greek phrase *apoichia oikòs*—a house that derives from another house—, which he translates as *vicinia domorum*.⁹ Here are the two passages from Dante's *Monarchia* in which the words *vicus* and *vicinia* appear.

First passage:

Nunc autem videndum est quid sit finis totius humane civilitatis: quo viso, plus quam dimidium laboris erit transactum, iuxta Philosophum *ad Nicomacum*.

Et ad evidentiam eius quod queritur advertendum quod, quemadmodum est finis aliquis ad quem natura producit pollicem, et alius ab hoc ad quem manum totam,

et rursus alius ab utroque ad quem brachium, aliusque ab omnibus ad quem totum hominem; sic alius est finis ad quem singularem hominem, alius ad quem ordinat domesticam comunitatem, alius ad quem *viciniam*, et alius ad quem civitatem, et alius ad quem regnum, et denique optimus ad quem universaliter genus humanum Deus eternus arte sua, que natura est, in esse producit. Et hoc queritur hic tanquam principium inquisitionis directivum. . . . Est ergo aliqua propria operatio humane universitatis, ad quam ipsa universitas hominum in tanta multitudine ordinatur; ad quam quidem operationem nec homo unus, nec domus una, nec una *vicinia*, nec una civitas, nec regnum particulare pertingere potest. Que autem sit illa, manifestum fiet si ultimum de potentia totius humanitatis appareat (1.3.1–2).

We must therefore now see what is the purpose of human society as a whole; when we have seen this, more than half our work will be done, as Aristotle says in the *Ethics*.

And to throw light on the matter we are inquiring into, it should be borne in mind that, just as there is a particular purpose for which nature produces the thumb, and a different one for which she produces the whole hand, and again a purpose different from both of these for which she produces the arm, and a purpose different from all of these for which she produces the whole person; in the same way there is one purpose for which the individual person is designed, another for the household, another for the small community, yet another for the city, and another for the kingdom; and finally the best purpose of all is the one for which God Everlasting with his art, which is nature, brings into being the whole of mankind. And it is this purpose we are seeking here as the guiding principle in our inquiry. . . . There is therefore some activity specific to humanity as a whole, for which the whole human race in all its vast number of individual human beings is designed; and no single person, or household, or small community, or city, or individual kingdom can fully achieve it. Now what this activity is will become clear when once we clarify what is the highest potentiality of the whole of mankind.

Second passage:

Si consideremus *vicum* unum, cuius finis est comoda tam personarum quam rerum auxiliatio, unum oportet esse aliorum regulatorem, vel datum ab alio vel ex ipsis preheminentem consentientibus aliis; aliter ad illam mutuam sufficientiam non solum non pertingitur, sed aliquando, pluribus preheminerentibus, *vicinia* tota destruitur (1.5.6).

If we consider a small community, whose purpose is neighborly support in relation both to people and to goods, there must be one person who guides the others, either appointed by someone from outside or emerging as leader from

among their number with the agreement of the others; otherwise not only will they fail to achieve that neighborly collaboration, but sometimes, if a number of people contest the leadership, the whole community is destroyed.¹⁰

Because we know that *vicinia* and *vicinanza* were synonymous in Dante's time, *vicinanza* being a vernacularization of *vicinania* or *vicinia*,¹¹ the first question that arises is: Are the two words *vicus* and *vicinia* synonymous as well in the *Monarchia*? Second, what is Dante's source for the word *vicinia*? And third, when Dante introduced *vicinia* or *vicinanza* in the *Convivio*, did he know that these words indicated not only the old villages but also new forms of social aggregations that were active in his own time? As the *Monarchia* will show, Dante probably takes the word *vicinia* from the *Politics* of Aristotle in the Latin translation of William of Moerbeke. In the first book of this work, in fact, we find both *vicinia* and *vicus* as part of the discussion about small human aggregations.¹² We may therefore suppose that both Moerbeke and Aquinas, commenting on Aristotle, were also aware of the associations or institutions (*institutiones*) called *vicinie* that existed in northern Italy, as documents as early as the eleventh century attest, which antedates the translation of the *Politics* in circa 1260. The first goal of my discussion is to focus on such institutions that were called *vicinie* in Dante's time. These institutions are today documented in the archives of old villages that preserve their *statuti* or rules. The memory of them still survives in some parts of northern Italy and in particular we know also of a few documents preserved at the Capitolare Library in Verona that not only testify to the existence of such communities, but also suggest that Dante, having spent part of his exile in this area, could well have been informed of these organizations and rules.¹³ We know, for instance, that Dante often found himself in Verona, initially between 1303 and 1304, and then again later between 1312 and 1318. In 1320 he read his *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra* in the church of Sant'Elena in Verona.¹⁴

My discussion aims at filling the space between Aristotle's *Politics* and its medieval translation by pointing out that the word *vicinia* or *vicinanza* implies, in Dante's age, a village that shared property as *bona communia*. It refers to a small community that is sometimes legally organized. The *vicinia* was therefore a living example of a society based on solidarity and which presided over the cultivation of fields and administrative matters, though, to be sure, it was not always politically organized.

In light of several historical documents, the word *vicinia* as it is used in Dante's time cannot be understood as an equivalent term for a village or

a *vicinanza* consisting of *vicini*, that is, people who live in close proximity, or in a neighborhood. A *vicinia* signified instead an economic and agrarian organization that preexisted the rural commune and did not always have a recognized political identity.¹⁵ These associations, widespread in Dante's time particularly in the north of Italy, were the basis on which rural communes would be built, although not all *vicinie* were transformed into *comuni*. Members of such communities were called *vicini* and *consortes*. These were groups of free men who were also referred to as *boni homines*, where *boni* denoted those who possessed properties.

The origin of these *vicinie* is still uncertain. The term itself was used by Cicero, Seneca, and others to indicate neighborhood. According to some historians, the medieval *vicinie* emerged from an old tradition, active during the Roman Empire, of small communities that were the holders of *bona communia*, the *bona* or *compasqua*, common pastures or property devoted to a collective usage (*comunia* or *communalia pro indiviso*).¹⁶ Such common property was an important feature of the life of a *vicinia*. They survived the barbaric invasions and Longobard domination and over time became increasingly powerful. Because common property was diffused in the culture of Germans and of Longobards, their origin seems to derive from the juridical culture of the Longobards. Since continued use creates property (according to the law of *usucapione*), it followed that the continuous usage of *bona communia* created a common property and the common use of woods and pastures. However, this origin is highly debated. In such organizations, the Latin word *vicus*, indicating a village, was, in several documents, related to *vicinia*—not as synonymous with it but as indicating the common properties of the *vicus*.¹⁷

From 1000–1300, *vicinie* were part of the history of small communities that struggled to gain their independence from the emperor or from the nobility. According to documents of the twelfth century, the word *vicinitas* denotes an organized local community.¹⁸ In sum, the meaning of *vicinia* embraces not only a neighborhood or village but also a community that is not yet organized as a political entity (as the rural commune will be) but rather has the form of an agrarian-economic society.¹⁹

Since the eleventh century the word *vicinia* has encompassed juridical institutions of free men holding property, having their own rules. *Vicinia* indicated the assembly of such free men.²⁰ The difference from the Aristotelian *kome* derives from the fact that, whereas Aristotle describes it as a group of households or families, here *vicinia* seems to mark the appearance

of a small socially organized institution. In using the term Dante, I would suggest, was aware of this meaning and was not dependent solely on Aristotle's notion of *kome* or village; it should therefore be understood in light of the social evolutions that took place between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At that time, the word *vicinia*, although it is Latin, circulated as part of the vernacular, and consequently it should be understood as a new meaning arising from new associations.

My personal knowledge of such institutions derives from the work of an Italian artist, the Lombard sculptor Franca Ghitti who, in the 1960s, began to make a series of sculptures she called *vicinie*. She created a number of artifacts in wood, made through the assemblage of rejected materials, roughly carved. The surface of some bore nails which were exhibited as symbolically heralding aspects of the economy of the society and its agrarian-artisan culture. Some of the artifacts were actually maps of houses and fields or places devoted to animals. Ghitti's book, *Vicinia*, published by Scheiwiller in 1980 with an introduction by the art historian G. C. Argan,²¹ documents a new way of thinking about sculpture. It is an artist who brought into the language of sculpture what an historian like Fernand Brudel has called *la longue durée*, expressing that double dimension of a past that persists in a present, and of a present that looks back, searching the past for its own identity. Once Ghitti's book had appeared, Maria Corti reviewed it for her journal *Alfabeta*,²² although she did not recognize the connection with Dante in the word *vicinia*.

Franca Ghitti's book stimulated my interest in examining how Dante (and probably also his sources) understood the term *vicinia*. The word itself has to be seen in the context of the European political organization and its new forms of legal institutions diffused between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These institutions are part of the phenomenon of human associations that tried to weaken or destroy the centrality of the imperial institution by demanding recognition as social entities with juridical personality. In his book entitled *Universitas*, Michaud Quantin studies not only the associative forms that were spreading throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but also the new vocabulary that developed as a result, as new usages and meanings emerged from a classical vocabulary. He observes, for instance, that a *vicus* can pertain to urban life, or to a part of the city or suburb of a city. The difference here is between the city and the village, the latter being of a rural nature.

The terms *vicus* and *villa* in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries both refer to a small society of people. But Quantin uses references taken from scholars of law and commentators of the Justinian Codex to show that some aggregations that lacked a juridical authority gave birth to a new kind of organization whose members held the right to possess goods. Some of these groups, establishing regulations typical of cities, could choose a mayor. Quantin shows that some rights previously granted only to cities were slowly being extended to small villages as well.²³

There is ample evidence to show that the term *vicinia* as used in the *Monarchia* is not equivalent to *vicus* and is not its variant. As Sella and Goldanica point out, villages were called *vici* and the people who lived in them *vicini*, but *vicinie* implied the *bona communia* (common goods) and therefore such villages did have an organized *vicinia*.²⁴ This is a not a marginal detail. Dante uses both terms only in *Monarchia*, but he seems to be aware that the two terms were not identical. In fact, among the *vici* (villages) and *vicini*, i.e., people living in rural villages, the institution of *vicinia* is sometimes present and sometimes not. For instance, documents published by Andrea Castagnetti, who writes about rural communities in the Middle Ages,²⁵ do not contain any reference to *vicinia*, though terms like *vici* and *vicini* are largely present. The fact that in the *Monarchia* we find both words suggests that Dante was most likely aware of their different meanings. In any case, we know that Dante wrote his political treatise after 1308 and therefore during his exile and after the years he spent in Verona.

What is the importance of the *vicinia* in Dante? A good place to begin answering this question is Aquinas, who defines *vicinia* as a natural community (*communitas*). In his commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*,²⁶ he states that the first form of community starts with a few closely situated houses, which constitutes a *vicus* or *vicinia*. He distinguishes this kind of community from that of the family and of the city. The family's community is built on everyday life because a family lives in the same house (1.1.18). What he calls *convicanei* (1.1.19), by contrast, have a kind of communication in actions that take place outside the house and are not part of everyday life. The community of *vicus* is natural, he remarks, quoting Aristotle, because it is natural to have children in the same way that it is natural for the One to give rise to the Many.²⁷ The origin of *vicinia* is also natural. It begins when grandchildren build their houses in close proximity to each other. The *vicinia* is natural in the same way in which the procreation of

individuals through reproduction is natural.²⁸ I want here to stress that Aquinas uses both *vicus* and *vicinia*. He also uses *vicinia domorum*, which he derives from Moerbeke's translation. Aquinas notes that the function of the *pater familias* is similar to that of the head of a *vicinia* and repeats that civilization is the union of several *vicorum*. The union, he says, starts as *civitas*. Here Aquinas borrows the Aristotelian idea that what is one is more important than what is many because the city as a union of small villages is more important than just many unrelated small villages. The goal of organizing such small entities is the work of creating the *civitas*, and each human being is a civic animal, that is, a being owing allegiance to a city.

Because the society that develops in the *vicinia* is natural, the *vicinia* becomes the archetype for a civic *communitas*, whose members Aquinas calls *convicanei* or *cum vicanei*. For Aquinas and Dante, *vicinia* seems to be the perfect molecular model of unity from which human beings naturally come to acquire a grounding in principles of morality. In the fourth book of the *Convivio* Dante defines a human being as a *compagnevole animale*. Aquinas observes, commenting on Aristotle, that the goal of natural things is the actualization of the nature of everything. Because of this, the end of *vicinia* is in the actualization of human nature, which is both associative and economic and is the basis of moral fulfillment.

The question arises as to why Dante, a great supporter of the Empire, should be interested in such small forms of human organization that were increasingly seeking to establish their own authority and independence from the Empire. Dante's attention to such institutions both in *Convivio* and *Monarchia* cannot be considered as detached from the importance he gives to the notion of monarchy, or world government. Consequently, the discourse about *vicinie* perhaps points to the relationship Dante seeks to establish between the small communities and his idea of Empire.

We are now entering a region that is at once both political and philosophical in nature. It is important to note first that in the *Monarchia* Dante makes use of the term *universitas*,²⁹ which, according to the commentators of the codex, implies a de facto community distinct from communities that are legally recognized (Quantin, 125). In the same work, the word *humanitas* holds the meaning of the many united by the natural link of being human. Such scattered observations have, first of all, a central goal. It seems essential for Dante that what is organized and/or socially or politically structured has to be the result of a natural link. Aquinas stresses that

the natural bond among human beings is the biological link that unites man and woman. But in Dante, as part of the discussion about human associations, something new and different enters into play that we do not find either in Aristotle or in Moerbeke and Aquinas. For Dante as for Aristotle, what is natural goes beyond mere biological instinct. For Dante, however, the intellectual-cognitive goal is also natural, and its satisfaction is naturally grounded. The novelty he introduces is that the impulse to association is not just biological in nature but also intellectually motivated. In the two fragments from the *Monarchia* in which the words *vicus* and *vicinia* are introduced, the focus falls on the idea that a social organization develops out of a natural intellectual need. The opening chapters of *Monarchia* are extremely clear about this: the idea of universal Empire is born from the idea that human beings have a common intellect. To the political One or Empire there corresponds the intellectual One, that is, the possible intellect. The word “monarchy” itself includes the meaning of the One as principle or rule. As a *nomen compositum*, the word combines the Greek words *monos* and *archè* and thus connotes the principle or rule of the One.³⁰

Now by deploying the term *vicinia/ vicinanza* in the *Convivio* and returning to it in the *Monarchia*, Dante was partially following Aristotle and regarded these associations as historical proof of something natural, that is, something rooted in the biological instinct and nature of human beings, who, for their fulfillment, need to live in association. In addition, this associative impulse is natural because it involves the human being’s intellectual need. Because of it the de facto communities of *vici* were a step toward the formation of *universitas hominum*, the latter being the universal association that guarantees the actualization of the human possible intellect, an intellect that can be reduced in act only by the multitude of the human genus (*Monarchia* 1,3). The *universitas* is the universal based on the particular. Dante was also aware that this basic need, which was both intellectual and biological, was embodied in new historical forms in which de facto communities were transformed into new ones through economic and juridical ties. In the *Convivio* (4.4.1), he states that “man is by nature a social animal”: “l’uomo naturalmente è compagnevole animale.”³¹ Because *vicinie* in Dante’s age are a phenomenon that can be assimilated to the rural commune, or that anticipates it, we must now return to the problem I posed earlier. That is to say, we must ask: if Dante had knowledge of the

attempt on the part of such small communities to constitute themselves as small political unities, why did he not reject them?³²

Dante's strong support of the empire as the providentially ordained authority of imperial government is well known. But as a man of the thirteenth century, he believed that cities and small communities were not the enemies of the empire. He believed, rather, that the empire and it alone could bring all the cities, villages and communities under a single ruler who would be the guarantor of peace. Dante's goal is universal human happiness, and such happiness would not be possible for human beings living outside of society because they are by nature social animals. For Dante each small community is a step toward the formation of the Empire, which includes the whole of such communities whose territory is coincident with the world. The emperor can guarantee peace because being owner of the whole he can have no desire to increase his wealth and power by virtue of already possessing everything. No one who possesses everything can desire more, since that would be impossible and therefore illogical. Consequently he can give human beings the peace necessary for their happiness. In the *Convivio* we find the related idea that the desire for possessions is proper only to human beings, and that this desire can be eradicated only if a human being already possesses in its entirety what it is possible to possess.³³

The *Monarchia* develops this idea in a more complex way. Human happiness here is linked to the actualization of the ultimate goal set for human beings. This goal, which is something proper to humans, lies in their capacity to learn through the use of the intellect. Dante calls this intellect "possible," and for him the actualization of the possible intellect requires that humans first be united in community.³⁴

In this context, Dante introduces the word *vicinia* as an example of a small minimal unity, which shows the natural instinct for associations as part of the human inclination to actualize man's intellectual potential, but which cannot fulfill it. Here we encounter the link Dante establishes between this possible intellect and the practical intellect, which is an extension of the speculative intellect and which presides over human action and production. The highest power in the human being qua human being is his capacity to apprehend through his possible intellect:

Non est ergo vis ultima in homine ipsum esse simpliciter sumptum, quia etiam sic sumptum ab elementis participatur; nec esse complexionatum, quia hoc reperitur in mineralibus; nec esse animatum, quia sic etiam in plantis; nec esse apprehensivum, quia sic etiam participatur a brutis; sed esse apprehensivum per

intellectum possibilem: quod quidem esse nulli ab homine alii competit vel supra vel infra. . . . *Patet igitur quod ultimum de potentia ipsius humanitatis est potentia sive virtus intellective.*

So the highest faculty in a human being is not simply to exist, because the elements too share in the simple fact of existence; nor is it to exist in compound form, for that is found in minerals; nor is it to exist as a living thing, for plants too share in that; nor is it to exist as a creature with sense perception, for that is also shared by the lower animals; but it is to exist as a creature who apprehends by means of the potential intellect: this mode of existence belongs to no creature (whether higher or lower) other than human beings. . . . *It is thus clear that the highest potentiality of mankind is his intellectual potentiality or faculty (Mon. 1.3.6–8; emphasis added).*

And because, according to Dante, such potentiality cannot be actualized by the single human being or by any one of the social groupings, it is necessary to have a multitude of human beings in order to fulfill it:

Et quia potentia ista per unum hominem seu per aliquam particularium comunitatum superius distinctarum tota simul in actum reduci non potest, necesse est multitudinem esse in humano genere, per quam quidem tota potentia hec actuetur (*Mon. 1.3.8*).

And since that potentiality cannot be fully actualized all at once in any one individual or in any one of the particular social groupings enumerated above, there must needs be a vast number of individual people in the human race, through whom the whole of this potentiality can be actualized.

Dante's conclusion is that only empire, as the supreme unity, can guarantee such actualization, which also guarantees practical activity. Dante explains that command and rule must be in the hands of only one person, as in the family and the *vicus*. If this does not happen, the *vicinia* will be destroyed. In this passage *vicus* is defined as a community having as its goal the good of the people and their various forms of property: *cuius finis est commoda tam personarum quam rerum auxiliatio* (1.5.6). Aquinas stressed that the goal of small villages was to become a city. But Dante believes that the small entity in itself has its own goal: it must protect the *bona* or goods of the small-scale community. In this context he uses the term *vicinia*, which seems to express a meaning close to what has been established by historians for the *vicinia*: an institution that holds and administers *bona communia*. If we equate *vicus* with village, and *vicinia* with the name of its organization, the value of the small entity is established and secured.

Dante adds, moreover, that if the *vicus* lacks an individual who leads the others, the *vicinia* will be destroyed:

Si consideremus vicum unum, cuius finis est comoda tam personarum quam rerum auxiliatio, *unum oportet esse aliorum regulatorem*, vel datum ab alio vel ex ipsis preheminentem consentientibus aliis; aliter ad illam mutuam sufficientiam non solum non pertingitur, sed aliquando, pluribus preheminerent volentibus, *vicinia tota destruitur* (*Mon.* 1.5.6; emphasis added).

If we consider a small village community, whose purpose is neighbourly support in relation both to people and to goods, *there must be one person who guides the others*, either appointed by someone from outside or emerging as leader from among their number with the agreement of the others; otherwise not only will they fail to achieve that neighbourly collaboration, but sometimes, if a number of people contest the leadership, *the whole community is destroyed*.

It is thus suggested that *vicinia* is the microcosm of the macrocosm, the Empire, in its ideal or perfect form. This parallel between the small and the big is what Dante leads his reader to understand. The power of the One is required in every social aggregation. It is the small community that represents the molecular actuality of the utopian empire. *Vicinia* is something natural and is the result of consensus or agreement. As such, it anticipates not only that the natural is without error, as Dante will write in *Purgatorio*, but also that human beings can live together by regulating themselves and sharing property. And because the common good empowers human beings, the ideal of the empire is built by taking into account the pattern of such small entities. Dante's utopia of the empire is thus partially shaped by looking at such molecular communities as models of human *conviventia*. The universality of the empire does not, then, ignore the particular or small. Rather this is confirmed by a passage of Book 1 of *Monarchia*, which shows that the small, the peculiar character of a place or people, has to be preserved and respected for what it is. This idea was defended by the canonists and active in Gratian, in whose *Decretum* (D. 1, C. 1) we read: "Omnes leges aut divineae sunt, aut humanae. Divineae natura, humanae moribus constant" (Laws are either divine or human. Divine law is natural, human law is made by human customs). Here, *mos* is defined as *longa consuetudo*, or long-standing custom.³⁵ Dante recalls here the Aristotelian principle of equity, which he takes from the *Nicomachean Ethics* and which was also active in Aquinas' *Summa* II-II, q. 120, a. 1. I quote from *Monarchia* 1,14:

Sed humanum genus potest regi per unum supremum principem, qui est Monarcha. Propter quod advertendum sane quod cum dicitur 'humanum genus potest regi per unum supremum principem', non sic intelligendum est, ut minima iudicia cuiuscunque municipii ab illo uno immediate prodire possint: cum etiam leges municipales quandoque deficiant et opus habeant directivo, ut patet per Philosophum in quinto *ad Nicomacum* epyikiam commendantem. Habent nanque nationes, regna et civitates intra se proprietates, *quas legibus differentibus regulari oportet*: est enim lex regula directiva vite" (*Mon.* 1.14.4–7; emphasis added).

But mankind can be ruled by one supreme ruler, who is the monarch. On this point it must of course be noted that when we say 'mankind can be ruled by one supreme ruler', this is not to be taken to mean that trivial decisions in every locality can be made directly by him—even though it can happen that local laws are sometimes defective and there may be a need for guidance in implementing them, as is clear from what Aristotle says in the fifth book of the *Ethics* when he commends the principle of equity. For nations, kingdoms and cities have characteristics of their own, *which need to be governed by different laws*; for law is a rule which governs life.

The universal has balance with the particular since equity must take into account what is municipal and local and has its own characteristics. Because different places and peoples have different lives, they require different laws. Moreover, because every particular political institution has its own goal, it would be foolish to suppose that all would have a common purpose.

To recapitulate, Dante holds with Aristotle that every created thing has its own operation and goal. There is a goal for the production of particular things and a goal as well for the universal. This goal is an operative one. And because it is particular, Dante raises the question: what is the operation that is proper to *humanitas* and *universitas* and to which the whole of *humanitas* is ordered (1.3)? The answer: the total actualization of intellectual power or potentiality. This, however, cannot be accomplished by a single individual, family, or village, but only by *humanitas* as a whole. What guarantees such a whole is the political institution of empire, which in Dante's utopia has power and authority over the entire world. In *Monarchia* 1.5 Dante returns to the idea that all things created have their own goal and reiterates a concept that he had first explained in *Convivio* 4: if many things are ordered to the same goal, then it is necessary that one of them rule or govern, and that the others be ruled or governed. He continues his argument in the *Monarchia* expounding on the peculiar operation

of such small entities, using two different words: *vicus* and *vicinia*. But here the term *vicus* implies the preservation of *bona* or property, so his passage shows an awareness of a community that holds common goods. This passage then employs the word *vicinia* to connote an organism that is a social organized community ruled by one and holding *bona* (goods). Something that has never been expressed by Dante before occurs here because the two terms, *vicus* and *vicinia*, while closely related, have different meanings. *Vicus* as a *de facto* community needs a different word to indicate that such community is organized and ruled; the term *vicinia* seems to include such a meaning. And it is because of it that this small, organized microcosm works as a foundational unity of the macrocosm called empire. If this is true, then Dante's *Monarchia* is based not only on the notion of the One as its principle or rule: it also involves a One that encompasses the idea of plurality. The One as both One and Many lies at the core of Dante's idea of empire, which he also calls a "temporal monarchy" (1.1.5 and 1.2.2).

Dante's understanding of this notion of course derives from Aristotle's distinction between the One as denoting the utter simplicity of Being, and the One as a unity formed from spatio-temporal multiplicity.³⁶ The notion of Empire conflates these two principles. But it is less recognized that the philosophical notion of the One is made up of many entities that *become* one. It is on the basis of precisely this concept that Dante's idea of empire rests. The notion of the One as being one and many is not inconsistent with the notion of small political entities governed by local laws reflecting the customs of a particular group of people. It is in this context that Dante conceives municipal laws (*leges municipales*) as the particular that has to be evaluated and incorporated into the general.³⁷ Dante frequently refers to the idea of the One as the result of a *unitas*:

Sed tunc genus humanum maxime est unum, quando totum unitur in uno: quod esse non potest nisi quando uni principi totaliter subiacet, ut de se patet" (*Mon.* 1.8.4).³⁸

But mankind is most a unity when it is drawn together to form a single entity, and this can only come about when it is ruled as one whole by one ruler, as is self-evident.

Dante seems to be aware of the small local institutions and of the medieval institution of *vicinia*. What interests him is the double nature of *vicinia*: a natural association biological in origin which is at the same time a legally

organized community. The notion of *vicinia* shows that what originates biologically tends to be organized and ruled in virtue of the *concordia* of the many. In other words, a de facto community is naturally inclined toward a social and or political organization.

Dante takes into account what takes place in the small and particular, which he seems to regard as foundational for the universal. The political One of Monarchy is built on a pragmatic vision of the many organisms that were part of the European landscape in Dante's age. His idea of a natural tendency toward unity is modeled on the associative impulse that such small aggregations manifest. The One of empire is one and many, is universal but takes into account local or particular communities. The political One belongs to the world of time and history; the metaphysical One is its paradigm. But the world of accidentality, a category proper to the world of physics and therefore to time and space, applies to the earthly imperial One. A relationship therefore presides over Dante's idea that the possible intellect is one, but a One in which every individual of the *universitas humanorum* participates. This relationship is evident in Dante's idea of Monarchy, which is one but a one that is shared by the plurality of the many organized communities, among them the small *vicinie*.

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NOTES

1. *Monarchia*, in *Opere minori*, vol. 2, ed. Bruno Nardi (Milan: Ricciardi, 1979), 1.3.2 and 1.5.7.
2. "Il vocabolo *vicinanza* traduce il termine *vicus* della versione latina che a sua volta rende il *kome* del testo greco." Dante, *Convivio*, in *Opere minori*, vol. 1/2, ed. Cesare Vasoli and Domenico De Robertis (Milan: Ricciardi, 1988), 551.
3. Maria Simonelli, *Materiali per un'edizione critica del Convivio di Dante* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1970), 248.
4. *Il Convivio*, ed. Giovanni Busnelli and Giuseppe Vandelli (Florence: Le Monnier, 1934–37).
5. *Convivio*, ed. Franca Brambilla Agno, in *Le opere di Dante Alighieri*, Edizione Nazionale a cura della Società Dantesca, vol. 2 (Florence: Le Lettere, 1995), 276. Brambilla Agno however is not consistent: "è presumibile che errato sia *vicinie* e non *vicinanze*" (1:162).
6. *Convivio*, ed. Giorgio Inglese (Milan: Rizzoli, 1993).
7. The English translation is from *Dante's Il Convivio (The Banquet)*, translated by Richard Lansing (New York: Garland, 1990).
8. See *Monarchia*, ed. Bruno Nardi (Milan: Ricciardi, 1996), 310–11.
9. *Monarchia*, ed. Bruno Nardi, 310.
10. The English translation is from *Monarchia*, ed. and trans. by Prue Shaw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

11. Du Cange, *Glossarium medie et infimae latinitatis*, 2 vols. (Favre: Niot, 1883); G. Goldanica, *Le vicinie di Valcamonica. L'antica organizzazione economico-agraria popolare preesistente al comune rurale. Vicinie precomunali e Vicinie comunali* (Darfo, 1998), 7.

12. For such small aggregations in western Europe and their different nominations see P. Michaud Quantin, *Universitas: Expressions du Mouvement Communitaire dans le Moyen Age Latin* (Paris: Vrin, 1970), 124–25.

13. Andrea Castagnetti, *Le comunità rurali dalla soggezione signorile alla giurisdizione del comune cittadino* (Verona: Libreria Universitaria editrice, 1983), 7–18.

14. Giorgio Petrocchi, *Vita di Dante* (Rome: Laterza, 1983), 189–92.

15. Pietro Sella, *La vicinia come elemento costitutivo del Comune* (Milan: Hoepli, 1908), esp. chap. 1: "La vicinia nell'età precomunale."

16. Sella, *La vicinia come elemento*, 3–10.

17. G. Goldanica, *Le vicinie di Valcamonica*, 16.

18. Castagnetti, *Le comunità rurali*, 17. In Du Cange, *Glossarium*, *vicinitas* has the meaning of "commodum quod ex vicinia percipi potest" (a privilege that can be achieved by vicinia).

19. For the passage from vicinia to commune, see Sella, *La vicinia come elemento*, chaps. 2 and 3; and Goldanica, *Le vicinie di Valcamonica*, 10–15.

20. Alessandro Sina, *Esine. Storia di una terra camuna* (Mantova: SCRIPTORIUM Studio Bibliografico, 1946), quotes a document he ascribes to the fifteenth century, in vernacular, in which *vicinia* is coincident with the commune (23). Sina identifies *vicinia* with the general assembly of *vicini* convoked to discuss issues related to the good of community (19–23).

21. F. Ghitti, *Vicinie. La terra e i segni nella scultura in legno di Franca Ghitti*, preface by G. C. Argan (Milan: Scheiwiller, 1980).

22. Maria Corti, "Vicinie," in *Alfabeta* (March, 1981). See also *Mappe, 1965–1990: Cinque installazioni di Franca Ghitti*, text by Maria Corti (Pavia: Università degli Studi, Collegio Cairoli, 1990).

23. According to Michaud Quantin, "vicus" may be part of the urban aggregation or may be "a quartier" or "faubourg" of a ville. Quantin stresses that the problem related to such small communities is to understand in what measure they may have a juridic statue and their own autonomy, or if their personality is based on that of a larger and more important community. He states that according to the *Digestum*, *vici* could be empowered like cities by imperial privilege to establish laws and that *villae* and *castellum* are included by the term *vici*. Citing the *Etymologies* of Huguccio, lexicographers note that *vici* are constituted by an aggregation that does not have its own statute. Therefore the *vicus* is not an autonomous juridical entity; they are *vici* communities de facto lacking their own proper authority. Citing Albert de Gandino's *Questiones statutorum*, Quantin considers however that *la ville* or *castrum* are a part of the city, can hold properties or common goods, and may elect their own representatives and promulgate local statutes different from those of the city on which they depend, applying the principle of the value of local communities (*Universitas*, 124–26).

24. Goldanica, *Le vicinie*, 16. Sina, *Esine*, writes that vicinia coincides with the assembly of *vicini*, 23.

25. Castagnetti, *Le comunità rurali*, 17.

26. Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Politicorum*, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 48 (Rome: Frati Domenicani di S. Sabina, 1971).

27. *Sententia libri Politicorum*, 1.1.9–10.

28. *Sententia libri Politicorum*, 1.1.28: "Dicit ergo primo, quod vicinia domorum, quae est vicus, maxime videtur esse secundum naturam. Nihil enim est magis naturale quam propagatio multorum ex uno in animalibus; et hoc facit viciniam domorum. Hos enim qui habent domos vicinas, quidam vocant *collactaneos*, idest filios, et *puerorum pueros*, idest nepotes, ut intelligamus quod huiusmodi vicinia domorum ex hoc primo processit quod filii et nepotes multiplicati instituerunt diversas domos iuxta se habitantes. Unde cum multiplicatio proles sit naturalis, sequitur quod communitas vici sit naturalis." [He says then, first of all, that the proximity of households, which constitutes the village, seems to be according to nature in the highest degree. For nothing is more natural than the propagation of many from one in animals; and this brings about a proximity of households. Indeed, some people call those who have neighboring households foster brothers and children, that is, sons

and children of children, that is, grandsons, so that we may understand that such a proximity of households originally springs from the fact that sons and grandsons, having multiplied, founded different households and lived close to one another. Hence, since the multiplication of offspring is natural, it follows that the village society is natural.]

29. *Mon.* 3.4 and 1.7.1–2.

30. *Mon.* 1.15.1: “Item dico quod ens et unum et bonum gradatim se habent secundum quintum modum dicendi ‘prius’. Ens enim natura precedit unum, unum vero bonum: maxime enim ens maxime est unum, et maxime unum maxime bonum; et quanto aliquid a maxime ente elongatur, tanto et ab esse unum et per consequens ab esse bonum . . . Propter quod in omni genere rerum illud est optimum quod est maxime unum, ut Philosopho placet in hiis que *De simpliciter ente*. Unde fit quod unum esse videtur esse radix eius quod est esse bonum, et multa esse eius quod est esse malum; qua re Pictagoras in correlationibus suis ex parte boni ponebat unum, ex parte vero mali plurale, ut patet in primo eorum que *De simpliciter ente*. . . . Constat igitur quod omne quod est bonum per hoc est bonum: quod in uno consistit.” [Again, I say that being, unity and goodness are related in a sequence, according to the fifth sense of the term ‘priority.’ Being naturally comes before unity, and unity before goodness: perfect being is perfect unity, and perfect unity is perfect goodness; and the further removed something is from perfect being, the further it is from being one and consequently from being good. Therefore in every species of thing the best is that which is perfectly one, as Aristotle says in the *Metaphysics*. This is how it comes about that unity seems to be the root of what it is to be good, and plurality the root of what it is to be evil; that is why Pythagoras in his correlations placed unity on the side of goodness and plurality on the side of evil, as is clear in the first book of the *Metaphysics*. . . . It is clear then that everything which is good is good for this reason that it constitutes a unity.]

31. The adjective “compagnevole” suggests that Dante knew the vernacular translation of Aegidius Romanus’ *De Regimine principum*, which Dante recalls in *Convivio* 4.24.9. See *Convivio*, ed. Vasoli, 550.

32. This aspect of Dante’s political thought is extremely interesting. It relies on a principle he takes from Aristotle but which he relates to his political time, in which the commonality of cities juridically recognized were a reality Dante would never deny. But whether Dante did or did not have knowledge of the juridical status of such institutions, “vicinia” as a small community is fundamental because it represents a form of natural aggregation. Aquinas, for instance, says that the city is more important in what is not the result of aggregation, noting that in logical terms this comes before what is aggregate. Of course, for both Aquinas and Dante, the city is both natural in its origin and political. But Dante stresses that the political, in order to be good, must be natural, a thought based on his view that what is natural is without error as he writes in a different context (*Purg.* 17.94).

33. *Conv.* 4.4.3–4: “Onde, con ciò sia cosa che l’animo umano in terminata possessione di terra non si queti, ma sempre desideri gloria d’acquistare, sì come per esperienza vedemo, discordie e guerre conviene sorgere intra regno e regno, le quali sono tribulazioni delle cittadi, e per le cittadi delle vicinanze, e per le vicinanze delle case [e per le case] dell’uomo; e così s’impedisce la felicitade. Il perché, a queste guerre e alle loro cagioni tòrre via, conviene di necessitate tutta la terra, e quanto all’umana generazione a possedere è dato, essere Monarchia, cioè uno solo principato, e uno prencipe avere; lo quale, tutto possedendo e più desiderare non possendo, li regi tegna contenti nelli termini delli regni, sì che pace intra loro sia, nella quale si posino le cittadi, e in questa posa le vicinanze s’amino, [e] in questo amore le case prendano ogni loro bisogno, lo qual preso, l’uomo viva felicemente: che è quello per che esso è nato” [emphasis added]. [Since the human mind does not rest content with limited possession of land but always seeks to achieve glory through further conquest, as we see from experience, discord and war must spring up between one kingdom and another. Such things are the tribulations of cities, of the surrounding cities, of the communities, and of the households of individuals; and so happiness is hindered. Consequently, in order to do away with these wars and their causes, it is necessary that the whole earth, and all that is given to the human race to possess, should be a Monarchy—that is, a single principality, having one prince who, possessing all things and being unable to desire anything else, would keep the kings content within the boundaries of their kingdoms

and preserve among them the peace in which the cities might rest. Through this peace the communities would come to love one another, and by this love all households would provide for their needs, which when provided would bring man happiness, for this is the end for which he is born.]

34. *Mon.* 1.3.3: "Propter quod sciendum primo quod Deus et natura nil otiosum facit, sed quicquid prodit in esse est ad aliquam operationem. Non enim essentia ulla creata ultimus finis est in intentione creantis, in quantum creans, sed propria essentie operatio: unde est quod non operatio propria propter essentiam, sed hec propter illam habet ut sit. Est ergo aliqua propria operatio humane universitatis, ad quam ipsa universitas hominum in tanta multitudine ordinatur; ad quam quidem operationem nec homo unus, nec domus una, nec una vicinia, nec una civitas, nec regnum particulare pertinere potest. Que autem sit illa, manifestum fiet si ultimum de potentia totius humanitatis appareat." [Consequently the first point to bear in mind is that God and nature do nothing in vain; on the contrary whatever they bring into being is designed for a purpose. For in the intention of its creator *qua* creator the essential nature of any created being is not an ultimate end in itself; the end is rather the activity which is proper to that nature; and so it is that the activity does not exist for the sake of the essential nature, but the essential nature for the sake of that activity. There is therefore some activity specific to humanity as a whole, for which the whole human race in all its vast number of individual human beings is designed; and no single person, or household, or small community, or city, or individual kingdom can fully achieve it. Now what this activity is will become clear when once we clarify what is the highest potentiality of the whole of mankind.]

35. *Gratiani decreti*, D. I, C. 1 –5: "Apud Isidorum . . . mos est vetustate probata consuetudo sive lex non scripta. Nam lex a legendo vocata est quia scripta est . . . Mos autem longa consuetudo est. . . Consuetudo autem est ius quoddam moribus institutum, quod pro lege suscipitur, cum deficit lege." [According to Isidore . . . custom is a long accepted habit or unwritten law. In fact law derives from legere because it is written. . . Custom instead is a long established habit. . . Habit is a kind of right established as a custom of life which is recognized as law because a law is lacking.]

36. Book 4 of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Book 4 considers things that are part of the science of metaphysics, among them the One or *unum*. Book 5 discusses the meaning of various terms, including *unum*. Following the commentary by Aquinas, we must distinguish the One as identical with the being that is one and simple and that excludes composition, and the One that is composed of many unities. See *In Metaphysicorum* IV, 3, 566: "Sciendum est quod quamvis unum importat privationem implicitam, non tamen est dicendum quod importet privationem multitudinis . . . multitudo ponetur in definitione unius. . . Unde cum in definitione multitudinis ponatur unum (nam multitudo est aggregatio unitatum) sequitur quod sit circulus in definitionibus." [But it must be noted that, although unity includes an implied privation, it must not be said to include the privation of plurality. . . And it would also follow that plurality would be given in the definition of unity . . . Hence, since unity is given in the definition of plurality [for plurality is an aggregate of units], it would follow that there would be circularity in definitions.]

Another useful fragment follows at V, 8, 867: "Plurima aut sunt quae dicuntur unum, ex eo quod faciunt unum . . . sicut multi homines sunt unus populus, ex eo quod ab uno rege reguntur. Quedam vero dicuntur unum ex eo quod sunt aliquid unum, sicut multi possessores unius agri sunt unum in dominio eius." [Thus there are many things which are said to be one because they are doing one thing . . . for example, many men constitute one people because they are ruled by one king. And some are said to be one because they possess one thing; for example, many owners of a field are said to be one in their ownership of it.]

37. We may therefore define *vicinia* as having a mixed character: it is a community for *consuetudo hominum*, but also a political institution (I note that for Cicero *Tusculanae Quaestiones*, II, 37, "consuetudo altera natura est," i.e., is a second nature).

38. In *Mon.* 1.15.4–5 Dante returns to this idea of the one as the result of *unitas* or union, from which *concordia* derives as the *unitas* of plural wills that become one: "Constat igitur quod omne quod est bonum per hoc est bonum: quod in uno consistit. Et cum concordia, in quantum huiusmodi, sit quoddam bonum, manifestum est ipsam consistere in aliquo uno tanquam in propria radice. Que quidem radix apparebit, si natura vel ratio concordie summatur: est enim concordia uniformis motus plurium voluntatum; in qua quidem ratione apparet unitatem voluntatum, que per uniformem

motum datur intelligi, concordie radicem esse vel ipsam concordiam.” [It is clear then that everything which is good is good for this reason: that it constitutes a unity. And since concord, in itself, is a good, it is clear that it consists in some unity as in its root. What this root is will appear if we consider the nature or meaning of concord, for concord is a uniform movement of several wills; from this definition it is clear that unity of wills, which is what is signified by “uniform movement,” is the root of concord or indeed is concord itself.]

Psicologia ed etica della *paura* nel primo canto dell'*Inferno*: la *compunctio timoris*

ROBERTO REA

La paura nel prologo dell'*Inferno*

Il cammino salvifico di Dante inizia attraverso la paura. È questa la *passio* che domina il paesaggio fisico e morale, nonché la materia verbale, dei primi due canti infernali.¹ Non si tratta però di un'unica condizione psicologica, di una stessa paura che angoscia ininterrottamente l'animo del pellegrino, dal suo ritrovarsi nella "selva oscura" fino al principio dell' "altro viaggio". Prima di entrare, accompagnato da Virgilio, "per lo cammino aspro e silvestro", Dante deve affrontare una serie di paure che hanno natura, cause, conseguenze e quindi implicazioni psicologiche e morali differenti.

Tutto comincia con la paura provata nella selva. Per Dante raccontare la sua straordinaria esperienza oltremondana significa, prima di ogni altra cosa, rivivere quell'angoscia² (*Inf.* 1.4–6: "Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura / esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte, / che nel pensier rinova la *paura*").³ Del suo smarrimento nella selva Dante non ricorda altro: non solo non dice come ci sia finito (10–12: "Io non so ben ridir com'io v'intrai . . ."), ma nemmeno come ne sia uscito. Quello che più sembra premargli è comunicare al lettore la terribile paura provata: spiegare come gli avesse angustiato il cuore finché si trovava nella valle selvosa (14–15: "là dove terminava quella valle / che m'avea di *paura* il cor compunto"); come, una volta fuori, si fosse un poco acquietata alla vista del colle illuminato dal sole (17–19: "Allor fu la *paura* un poco queta, / che nel lago del cor m'era durata / la notte ch'io passai con tanta pieta"); e come, infine, fosse ancora ben viva quando si girò indietro a guardare il pericolo appena

scampato (23–25: “così l’animo mio, *ch’ancor fuggiva*, / si volse a dietro a rimirar lo passo / che non lasciò già mai persona viva”).⁴ Nei primi ventisette versi la narrazione si regge sulla rappresentazione di un episodio emozionale,⁵ che costituisce, dal suo (ri)sorgere al suo apparente estinguersi, l’unico elemento in grado di dare consistenza, coerenza e verosimiglianza ad una costruzione letteraria “di schematica semplicità e costituita da elementi archetipici (selva, colle, luce, ombra)”, e perciò – come spesso evidenziato dalla critica moderna – disorientante per il lettore.⁶ La stessa azione del protagonista, che proferirà le sue prime parole solo al v. 65, consiste di fatto unicamente nella sua reazione alla paura.

Dal v. 28 in poi gli accadimenti si moltiplicano, altre figure e personaggi entrano in scena, una storia più complessa inizia a delinearsi, anche nelle sue ragioni di fondo. Ma il racconto è ancora dominato dalla *passio* della paura. La tregua interiore ispirata dalla vista del colle dura infatti poco. Una nuova invincibile paura è indotta dall’apparizione delle tre fiere, che impediscono al pellegrino di salire il monte: non tanto la lonza, di cui può comunque ben sperare, ma il leone (44–45: “ma non sì che *paura* non mi desse / la vista, che m’apparve, d’un leone”), che fa tremare addirittura l’aria, con ripresa di un effetto cavalcantiano (48: “sì ch’e’ pareo che l’aere ne *tremesse*”), e soprattutto la lupa, tanto terribile da prostrare ogni speranza di proseguire il cammino (52–54: “questa mi porse tanto di gravezza / con la *paura* ch’uscita di sua vista, / ch’io perdei la speranza de l’altezza”). Nella disperata richiesta di aiuto a Virgilio, la lupa è ancora connotata mediante una proposizione causale che insiste sul suo aspetto terrificante (90–91: “aiutami da lei, famoso saggio, / ch’ella mi fa *tremar* le vene e i polsi”).

Dopo che Dante è stato soccorso da Virgilio, che lo ha invitato a tenere “altro viaggio”, quando sembra che nulla possa ormai ostacolare l’inizio del cammino, un ulteriore e diverso timore si manifesta nel suo animo. Dante teme di non essere degno o comunque in grado di affrontare siffatto viaggio (2.34–35: “Per che, se del venire io m’abbandono, / *temo* che la venuta non sia folle”). Virgilio qualifica questo timore come viltà, che spesso ingombra la mente di chi deve compiere imprese onorevoli (2.45: “l’anima tua è da *viltade* offesa . . .”). Per liberarlo da tale paura, Virgilio decide di rivelargli le ragioni del suo intervento (2.49: “Da questa *téma* a ciò che tu ti solve . . .”): Beatrice, presentatasi da lui, l’ha esortato ad accorrere in aiuto di Dante, spiegandogli come questi avesse interrotto il suo cammino per paura delle fiere e rischiasse di perdersi per sempre

(2.62–64: “ne la diserta piaggia è impedito / sì nel cammin che volt’è per paura; / e temo ch’e’ non sia già sì smarrito”). Nel seguito del colloquio riportato da Virgilio accade quindi una cosa che, semmai ce ne fosse bisogno, rimuove al lettore ogni dubbio circa l’assoluto rilievo che Dante attribuisce alla paura nella rappresentazione della sua condizione morale al principio del viaggio. Virgilio, nonostante la straordinarietà della situazione e della richiesta, nonostante l’urgenza con cui deve agire, non ha potuto rinunciare a rivolgere una domanda a Beatrice. E questo è comprensibile: la missione che gli viene affidata non è certo da poco. Meno comprensibile, a ben riflettere, è però la domanda che Virgilio ha scelto di porre alla gentilissima. Virgilio chiede perché lei, Beatrice, non ha paura di scendere nell’*Inferno* (2.82–84: “Ma dimmi la cagion che non ti guardi / dello scender qua giuso in questo centro / de l’ampio loco ove tornar tu ardi”). Si tratta di una richiesta che non può avere alcuna giustificazione di ‘realismo’ narrativo, né appare in alcun modo necessaria per spiegare specifici meccanismi dell’invenzione dantesca, come ad esempio quando Dante non potrà fare a meno di interrogare Farinata a proposito della facoltà dei dannati di conoscere il futuro ma non il presente.⁷ Una simile domanda può avere come unica spiegazione l’impellenza di Dante-narratore di precisare una nozione che ritiene evidentemente fondamentale per comprendere appieno le implicazioni morali e teologiche di una così straordinaria esperienza. Beatrice infatti non si scompone, ma risponde in modo puntuale, dando una definizione aristotelicamente rigorosa del *timor* (2.85–90: “‘Da che tu vuo’ saver cotanto a dentro, / dirotti brevemente’, mi rispuose, / ‘perch’io non temo di venir qua entro. / Temer si dèe di sole quelle cose / c’hanno potenza di fare altrui male; / dell’altre no, che non son paurose’”).⁸ Solo dopo tale definizione, Beatrice riferisce quello che invece doveva essere un dato ben più rilevante per comprendere le ragioni del viaggio, ovvero che la stessa Vergine e quindi Lucia si sono adoperate per Dante.

Terminato il racconto del colloquio con Beatrice, Virgilio esorta Dante ad abbandonare ogni timore (2.121–122: “Dunque, che è? perché? perché restai? / Perché tanta *viltà* nel cuor allette?”). Dante ha allora un moto di *ardire*, che è il tradizionale antidoto della paura,⁹ o almeno di questo particolare genere di paura (2.130–131: “tal mi fec’io di mia virtude stanca; / e tanto buono ardire al cor mi corse”), e finalmente intraprende il suo cammino “alto e silvestro”.

Se queste sono le premesse, ovvero se si pensa quale e quanto rilievo ha la paura, nelle sue diverse forme, nel prologo dell'*Inferno*, non si può dar certo torto a Boyde quando osserva, a proposito dei successivi mostri e accadimenti infernali, come, "although they are certainly portrayed as 'cose paurose', surprisingly little is made of the fear they might have been expected to arouse in the protagonist".¹⁰

Nonostante l'evidente centralità che Dante attribuisce alla paura all'inizio del viaggio infernale solo pochissimi studiosi vi hanno dedicato attenzione.¹¹ L'unico intervento specifico è quello di Vittorio Rossi sulla definizione di *timor* data da Beatrice nel secondo canto.¹² Per il resto, i soli a soffermarsi in modo puntuale, seppure brevemente, sulla paura iniziale, sono stati l'appena citato Boyde, all'interno del capitolo "Fear" del suo importante volume *Perception and Passion in Dante's Comedy*, e Cassell, nell'ambito di una reinterpretazione – in verità non del tutto convincente – del primo canto.¹³

In questo intervento mi propongo di esaminare la prima delle paure che scuotono l'animo del pellegrino al principio del viaggio. Come cercherò di dimostrare, la paura che angoschia Dante nella selva, non risponde, come comunemente ritenuto, soltanto ad istanze di rappresentazione letteraria, ma ha uno specifico significato morale e teologico: rappresenta la *compunctio timoris* (the compunction of fear) che, secondo una tradizione che va da Agostino a Tommaso, costituisce lo stadio iniziale del percorso spirituale che conduce alla salvezza cristiana.¹⁴

La paura nella selva: riconoscimento di sé e contrizione

La paura su cui Dante tanto insiste nei versi iniziali del poema è in genere motivata sulla base della lettera del testo. Si tratterebbe della comune paura propria di un uomo che si smarrisce in una selva sconosciuta e spaventosa, da cui disperava di poter uscire. Di questa opinione è anche Boyde, che non dà molto rilievo a tale condizione iniziale: "this fear had been of a general kind – brought on by the absence of light and the harsh impenetrability of the forest in which he had lost his way".¹⁵

I pochi studiosi che ne hanno preso in considerazione le implicazioni morali, richiamandosi alla nozione teologica di *timor servilis*, l'hanno considerata come un tutt'uno con la paura provata da Dante di fronte alle tre fiere, attribuendole così un valore fortemente negativo, in quanto causa

di perdizione.¹⁶ Singleton nella nota a *Inf.* 1.6 osserva che “Fear, which always besets the sinful life and enslaves the sinner (in theology, *timor servilis*), proves to be the main impediment at the start of the journey”.¹⁷ Freccero ha rimarcato come, in conformità con la psicologia aristotelica, tale paura ostacoli di fatto il cammino, provocando una contrazione degli spiriti vitali e compromettendo così il controllo delle operazioni motorie, tanto che—sottolinea lo studioso—il pellegrino deve riposare “un poco il corpo lasso” (v. 28).¹⁸

Tuttavia, a me sembra che proprio la lettera del testo, a proposito della paura iniziale—che, è bene ribadire, scaturisce da una condizione psicologica diversa rispetto a quella che Dante sperimenterà di fronte alle tre fiere—fornisca indicazioni di altro tipo, da cui discendono implicazioni più complesse e rilevanti.

In primo luogo, a ben guardare tale paura non è semplicemente indotta dall'aspetto o dalla natura della selva. Come accade ad esempio nel caso del bosco dei suicidi, dove Dante, di fronte al mostruoso prodigio del tronco che emette sangue e parole umane, s'arresta sgomento (*Inf.* 13.43–45 “sì de la scheggia rotta usciva insieme / parole e sangue: ond'io lascia la cima / cadere, e stetti come l'om che teme”). La selva in cui Dante smarrisce la “diritta via” è senz'altro terribile (vv. 2–6 “oscura . . . selvaggia e aspra e forte”), ma la paura non è determinata da un pericolo o una minaccia—come quella suscitata dalle tre fiere—, ma dalla stessa presa di coscienza di trovarsi lì, dall'improvvisa consapevolezza di sé.¹⁹

L'origine e la natura della paura dantesca risiede tutta nel significato del verbo “mi ritrovai” (v. 2). Il predicato, il primo del poema, significa infatti ‘presi coscienza di me (e quindi del mio stato di peccato)’. Pascoli aveva osservato: “è indicato con questa parola, mi pare, il suo ritorno a conoscenza”.²⁰ Come Dante stesso infatti si preoccupa di specificare ai successivi vv. 10–12, fino ad allora non era stato cosciente e quindi non è in grado di dire come fosse giunto in quel luogo: “Io non so ben ridir com'io v'intrai, / tant era pien di sonno a quel punto / che la verace via abbandonai”. La condizione di «sonno» cui Dante fa riferimento è—come riconosciuto da tempo dai commentatori—il *somnus animae* agostiniano, che coincide con lo stato di peccato, inteso come perdita di coscienza ed oblio di Dio (Agostino, *Enarr. in Ps.* 62.4 “*Somnus autem animae est oblivisci Deum suum. Quaecumque anima oblita fuerit Deum suum, dormit*”).²¹ Il verbo *ritrovare* esprime insomma l'improvviso ridestarsi della coscienza. Singleton ne ha dato un'eccellente traduzione: “I came to myself”.²² Non

può invece in nessun modo avere in questo caso valore iterativo, secondo un'interpretazione che risale almeno a Guglielmo Maramauro: "un'altra volta mi trovai",²³ ripresa da alcuni studiosi moderni, con particolare convinzione da Cassell, il quale spiega "he found himself yet again", precisando che il verbo "mournfully . . . affirms and confesses recidivism or backsliding".²⁴ Aveva infatti già spiegato ottimamente Francesco da Buti: "perocchè molti vanno per questa a perdizione: però che di questa via viziosa non escono mai; ma tanto vi s'avviluppano che vi si perdono dentro, non *riconoscendosi* mai. Altri sono che, aiutati dalla grazia preveniente di Dio, *si riconoscono* e vengono al monte delle virtù, ove termina la valle scura de' vizi, della quale impaurisce chiunque à tanta grazia da Dio che *si riconosca*".²⁵ La paura che Dante prova nella selva è quindi l'angoscia che accompagna tale riconoscersi, è lo sgomento di chi improvvisamente capisce di essersi smarrito nel peccato.²⁶

Rimanda ad una condizione psicologica strettamente inerente alla presa di coscienza di sé anche il successivo riferimento del v. 15 "là dove terminava questa valle / che m'avea di paura il cor compunto", incentrato sul verbo *compungere*, di cui è pure importante comprendere appieno il significato. La maggior parte dei commentatori moderni tendono a neutralizzare il senso del verbo, spiegandolo mediante un generico sinonimo doloroso, probabilmente sulla scia del Boccaccio, che annotava "cioè afflitto".²⁷ Così, ad esempio, Sapegno parafrasa "trafitto, amareggiato", Bosco "turbato, angosciato, amareggiato"; Pasquini e Quaglio "trafitto", e così via.²⁸ Meglio gli ultimi commentatori, che, sulla scia di Mazzoni, rimarcano che si tratta di un "vocabolo scritturale ("compuncti sunt corde" di *Act. Ap. 2, 37*)".²⁹ Anche tale rinvio non rende tuttavia piena giustizia alla peculiare semantica 'tecnica' del verbo, che indica l'intima e dolorosa contrizione dovuta al riconoscimento dei propri peccati, come aveva compreso benissimo Filippo Villani, che spiegava: "Et erit compunctio cordis contritio que ad erroris recognitionem pertinet", rimandando allo "scotto / di pentimento che lagrime spanda" di *Purg. 30.144–45*. Su tale specifico valore si tornerà in modo approfondito più avanti, per ora basti aggiungere che la relazione semantica del verbo *compungere* con il doloroso riconoscimento di una propria colpa o mancanza è comunque confermata dalle occorrenze di *Inf. 10.109*: "Allor, come di mia colpa compunto", dove indica il sentimento di rimorso di Dante rimasto in silenzio di fronte alle angosciate domande di Cavalcante sulla sorte del figlio, e *22.124*: "Di che ciascun di colpa fu compunto", dove esprime,

non senza ironia, il senso di colpa dei diavoli che si sono lasciati sfuggire Ciampòlo di Navarra, che si è rituffato nella pece.³⁰

Sempre rimanendo alla lettera del testo, si può infine osservare che, per quel che riguarda gli effetti psicofisici, la conseguenza, ovvero l'azione prodotta da tale paura, non consiste affatto in un impedimento delle operazioni motorie. L'angoscia provata nella selva non rappresenta un ostacolo ad intraprendere il cammino salvifico. Questo sarà il risultato della paura suscitata dalle tre fiere, e in particolare dalla lupa, durante il tentativo di ascesa del colle. Al contrario, la paura della selva spinge il pellegrino a muoversi, a cercare scampo, determinando la più comune e caratterizzante delle reazioni fisiche proprie di tale passione: la fuga (si veda ancora Tommaso in *ST* II-II, q. 125, a. 1: "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod timor communiter dictus secundum suam rationem importat universaliter fugam"). Dante non si arresta, non retrocede, non ricade in basso, ma procede alla ricerca di una via di salvezza. Come già accennato, l'uscita dalla selva non viene descritta. Il racconto passa direttamente dal ricordo dello sgomento a quello del colle appena fuori dalla "valle" (vv. 13 ss. "Ma poi ch'i' fui al piè d'un colle giunto . . ."). Ma che si sia trattato di una fuga precipitosa, di un'affannosa ricerca di una via d'uscita, lo lascia comunque ben intendere la successiva similitudine con il naufrago che raggiunge spossato e atterrito la riva (vv. 22-27: "E, come quei che con lena affannata, / uscito fuor del pelago ala riva, / si volge all'acqua perigliosa e guata, / così l'animo mio, ch'ancor fuggiva, / si volse a rietro a rimirar lo passo / che non lasciò già mai persona viva"). Insomma, è la paura che spinge il pellegrino a muovere i primi passi del suo lungo viaggio. È senz'altro vero che—come osservato da Freccero—il timore, secondo la psicologia aristotelica, può ostacolare le operazioni razionali e motorie, ma, come spiega ancora Tommaso, quando è avvertito in una situazione di pericolo, al contrario, "adiuvat operationem, inquantum inclinatur voluntatem ad operandum ea per quae homo effugit id quod timet" (*ST* I-II, q. 44, a. 4): "[fear] conduces to action, in so far as it inclines the will to do that whereby a man escapes from what he fears." Questo fondamentale ruolo psicologico della paura come motivazione e stimolo all'azione è stato ben compreso da Boccaccio: "in quel guatare cognosce molto meglio il pericolo del quale è scampato, che esso non cognosceva, mentre che in esso era, per ciò che allora, *spronandolo la paura del perire, a null'altra cosa aveva l'animo che solo allo scampare*".³¹

Come dunque ad un esame più attento rivela la stessa lettera del testo, la paura provata nella selva non ha un valore negativo, non costituisce un impedimento alla salvezza, ma, al contrario, ha una funzione fortemente positiva: esprime la presa di coscienza della propria colpa e spinge il pellegrino a mutare la propria condizione. Dante lo riconosce apertamente. Non può essere infatti altro che tale riconoscimento di sé il discusso *bene* che egli dice di aver trovato nella stessa selva (cfr. *Inf.* 1.8 “del ben ch’i’ vi trovai”): “l’unica cosa che effettivamente trova nella selva qualificabile come ‘bene’ è la presa di coscienza del proprio stato, consentita dalla grazia di Dio, come aveva ben inteso Boccaccio: ‘per lo qual bene niuna altra cosa credo sia da intendere, altro che la misericordia di Dio’”³² ed anche Pietro Alighieri: “sed quod fuit illud bonum posset queri, et dico quod fuit subita mutatio eius animi ita de malo in bonum, mediante gratia Dei et recognitione pravi eius statu”.³³ Insomma, la stessa narrazione basta a far capire come Dante, se non avesse conosciuto quella paura che è in ultima istanza *timor Dei*, sarebbe stato dannato tra le innumerevoli anime che affollano la “riva malvagia / ch’attende ciascun uom che Dio *non teme*” (*Inf.* 3.107–108).

Ma si sa che la lettera del testo non esaurisce affatto i molteplici sensi del poema dantesco. Non si può dimenticare che, come, tra gli altri, sottolineò in un passo ben noto Benedetto Croce—e senza preoccuparsi troppo di nascondere il proprio disappunto—all’inizio del viaggio “ci si ritrova in una selva che non è una selva, e si vede un colle che non è un colle, e si mira un sole che non è un sole, e si incontrano tre fiere, che sono e non sono tre fiere”.³⁴ Insomma, in nessun altro luogo del poema come in questo primo canto, il senso letterale pare essere subordinato a quello allegorico.

L’azione del prologo, come intuito da Singleton, rappresenta la conversione cristiana, di cui è figura il racconto biblico dell’Esodo: mette in scena la “*conversio anime de luctu et miseria peccati ad statum gratie*” (the conversion of the soul from the sorrow and misery of sin to a state of grace).³⁵ In realtà, come pure spiegato dallo stesso Singleton e quindi da Freccero, si tratta propriamente di una conversione incompleta, fallita, poiché la strada che conduce alla salvezza è lunga e tortuosa: non basta voler uscire dalla selva per poter ascendere il monte. Ma qui importa che, per quanto destinato al fallimento, il tentativo messo in atto nel prologo costituisca l’inizio di un percorso di redenzione, che, in quanto tale, deve

muovere dal riconoscimento del proprio stato d'errore, dalla piena consapevolezza di sé, senza la quale non è possibile alcun atto della volontà, né di pentimento né d'espiazione.

A tale quadro allegorico va ricondotta la stessa paura, che tanta parte ha nella rappresentazione della psicologia del protagonista all'inizio del viaggio. L'attenzione degli studiosi, sin dall'antico commento, si è pressoché interamente concentrata sulla spiegazione allegorica degli altri elementi che compongono la scena iniziale: l'espressione "nel mezzo del cammin", la selva, il colle, il "pié fermo", le tre fiere, e così via. Tuttavia, il riconoscimento del valore della paura iniziale è altrettanto importante per comprendere il significato dell'allegoria morale di fondo. Come gli elementi appena citati, anche la paura presuppone infatti puntuali riferimenti dottrinali, che è necessario riconoscere per comprendere appieno l'esperienza salvifica che Dante sta narrando. Insomma, per capire perché Dante insista tanto sulla *passio* della paura nella messa in scena della condizione interiore del protagonista all'inizio del suo cammino salvifico bisogna guardare al ruolo che tale passione occupa nel pensiero medievale.

Il timore nella riflessione teologica: il *timor initialis*

Nella riflessione filosofica e teologica medievale la paura, o meglio il *timor*, è oggetto di un dibattito assai articolato. Questo interesse, come è stato osservato, non si spiega con il luogo comune di un Medioevo "ossessionato dalle fobie", ma è riconducibile al fatto che già nell'Antico Testamento, e quindi nella relativa tradizione esegetica, il *timor*, nelle sue diverse manifestazioni, gode di "una presenza numerosa e significativa":³⁶ solo per rimanere ai lemmi più frequenti, nella Vulgata *timor* e *timeo* presentano 708 occorrenze, cui si aggiungono le 58 di *metus*, *metuo*.

L'avvio di una riflessione organica sulle problematiche inerenti al *timor* risale ad Agostino, il quale, richiamandosi a una serie di passi scritturali, assegna a tale passione un valore positivo, elaborandone una prima suddivisione su base morale. La classificazione agostiniana viene ripresa e sviluppata da Gregorio Magno, come parte integrante della dottrina dei sette doni dello Spirito Santo, e quindi da Pietro Lombardo, che nelle sue *Sententiae* fissa il modello di riferimento, aggiungendo altri tipi di *timores*.³⁷ Successivamente, Giovanni Damasceno nel *De fide orthodoxa* estende la riflessione sul *timor* anche alla dimensione psicologica, ancor prima dell'introduzione di Aristotele. Infine, Tommaso, sulla scorta dell'aristotelismo,

rielabora tutte le classificazioni precedenti, conciliando la dimensione psicologica (*ST II-I*, q. 41) e quella morale (*ST II-II*, q. 19), in conformità con la costante ricerca di coerenza che caratterizza la sua antropologia teologica.³⁸

Nelle *Scritture*, in particolare nell'Antico Testamento, il timore viene infatti presentato in termini positivi come strumento necessario per affrancarsi dalla condizione di peccato (in part. sulla base di *Siracide* 1.27 "timor Dei expellit peccatum") e per poter così intraprendere il percorso che conduce al raggiungimento della sapienza cristiana (si veda ancora *Siracide* 1.16 "initium sapientiae timor Domini"; ed anche 22 e 25). Ma conviene riportare per esteso il passo della *Siracide* cui spesso si fa riferimento nella riflessione teologica sul *timor*, anche per mostrare l'intensità e l'enfasi con cui già nelle Scritture viene rivendicato il valore positivo dell'esperienza della paura (*Siracide* 1.8–30):³⁹

8 unus est Altissimus creator omnipotens rex potens et metuendus nimis sedens super thronum illius et dominans Deus 9 ipse creavit illam spiritu sancto et vidit et dinumeravit et mensus est 10 et effudit illam super omnia opera sua et super omnem carnem secundum datum suum et prae-buit illam diligentibus se 11 timor Domini gloria et gloriatio et laetitia et corona exultationis 12 timor Domini delectabit cor et dabit laetitiam et gaudium in longitudine dierum 13 timenti Dominum bene erit in extremis et in die defunctionis suae benedicetur 14 dilectio Dei honorabilis sapientia 15 quibus autem apparuerit in visu diligunt eam in visione et in agnitione magnalium suorum 16 *initium sapientiae timor Domini* et cum fidelibus in vulva concreatus est et cum electis seminis creditur et cum iustis et fidelibus agnoscitur 17 timor Domini scientiae religiositas 18 religiositas custodiet et iustificabit cor iucunditatem atque gaudium dabit 19 timenti Deum bene erit et in diebus consummationis illius benedicetur 20 plenitudo sapientiae timere Deum et plenitudo a fructibus illius 21 omnem domum illius implebit a generationibus et receptacula a thesauris illius 22 corona sapientiae timor Domini repollens pacem et salutis fructum 23 et vidit et dinumeravit eam utraque autem sunt dona Dei 24 scientiam et intellectum prudentiae sapientia conpartietur et gloriam tenentium se inaltat 25 radix sapientiae est timere Dominum rami enim illius longevi 26 in thesauris sapientiae intellectus et scientiae religiositas execratio autem peccatoribus sapientia 27 *timor Dei expellit peccatum* 28 nam qui sine timore est non poterit iustificari iracundia enim animositatis illius subversio illius est 29 usque in tempus sustinebit patiens et postea redditio iucunditatis 30 bonus sensus usque in tempus abscondebit verba illius et labia multorum enarrabunt sensum illius.

8 There is one most high Creator Almighty, and a powerful king, and greatly to be feared, who sitteth upon his throne, and is the God of dominion. 9 He created

her in the Holy Ghost, and saw her, and numbered her, and measured her. 10 And he poured her out upon all his works, and upon all flesh according to his gift, and hath given her to them that love him. 11 The fear of the Lord is honour, and glory, and gladness, and a crown of joy. 12 The fear of the Lord shall delight the heart, and shall give joy, and gladness, and length of days. 13 With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed. 14 The love of God is honourable wisdom. 15 And they to whom she shall shew herself love her by the sight, and by the knowledge of her great works. 16 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and was created with the faithful in the womb, it walketh with chosen women, and is known with the just and faithful. 17 The fear of the Lord is the religiousness of knowledge. 18 Religiousness shall keep and justify the heart, it shall give joy and gladness. 19 It shall go well with him that feareth the Lord, and in the days of his end he shall be blessed. 20 To fear God is the fulness of wisdom, and fulness is from the fruits thereof. 21 She shall fill all her house with her increase, and the store-houses with her treasures. 22 The fear of the Lord is a crown of wisdom, filling up peace and the fruit of salvation: 23 And it hath seen, and numbered her: but both are the gifts of God. 24 Wisdom shall distribute knowledge, and understanding of prudence: and exalteth the glory of them that hold her. 25 The root of wisdom is to fear the Lord: and the branches thereof are long-lived. 26 In the treasures of wisdom is understanding, and religiousness of knowledge: but to sinners wisdom is an abomination. 27 The fear of the Lord driveth out sin: 28 For he that is without fear, cannot be justified: for the wrath of his high spirits is his ruin. 29 A patient man shall bear for a time, and afterwards joy shall be restored to him. 30 A good understanding will hide his words for a time, and the lips of many shall declare his wisdom (Ecclesiasticus).

Proprio muovendo dalla citazione del versetto 16 “initium sapientiae timor Domini”, Agostino spiega come il timore sia necessario per prepararsi ad accogliere l'amore divino (*caritas*), poiché è segno della presa di coscienza dei propri peccati e quindi della propria disposizione a ricevere il perdono (27 “timor Dei expellit peccatum”). Senza timore, la carità non può quindi avere accesso al cuore del fedele. Solo quando il *timor* avrà preparato l'animo a ricevere la *caritas* questa potrà penetrarvi, sostituendosi progressivamente allo stesso timore, fino ad espellerlo del tutto ed a occupare interamente l'animo (cfr. *In Epistolam Joannis ad Partos* 9.4):⁴⁰

Ergo incipiat timor; quia initium sapientiae timor Domini. *Timor quasi locum praeeparat caritati*. Cum autem coeperit caritas habitare, pellitur timor qui ei prae-paravit locum. Quantum enim illa crescit, ille decrescit; et quantum illa fit interior, timor pellitur foras. Maior caritas, minor timor; minor caritas, maior timor. Si autem nullus timor, non est qua intret caritas. . . . Torquet cor conscientia peccatorum, nondum facta est iustificatio. Est ibi quod titillet, quod pungat. . . . Nam si sine timore

es, non poteris iustificari. Sententia dicta est de Scripturis: Nam qui sine timore est, non poterit iustificari. Opus est ergo ut intret timor primo, per quem veniat caritas. Timor medicamentum, caritas sanitas.

Then let fear make the beginning, because “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” *Fear, so to say, prepares a place for charity.* But when once charity has begun to inhabit, the fear which prepared the place for it is cast out. Greater charity, less fear; less charity, greater fear. *But if no fear, there is no way for charity to come in. . . . The consciousness of sins torments the heart: justification has not yet taken place.* There is that in it which itches, which pricks. . . . *For if thou be without fear, thou canst not be justified. It is a sentence pronounced by the Scriptures; “For he that is without fear, cannot be justified.” Needs then must fear first enter in, that by it charity may come.* Fear is the healing operation; charity, the sound condition.

Tuttavia, Agostino ha il problema di conciliare tale concezione del *timor*, che in quanto segno della consapevolezza del peccato costituisce una condizione morale destinata ad essere superata nell’ambito del percorso di perfezionamento spirituale, con altre citazioni scritturali in cui il timore viene invece presentato come requisito *castus* e permanente del buon cristiano, come ad esempio in Ps 18.10: “Timor Domini castus, permanens in saeculum saeculi” [The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring for ever]. Per risolvere questa apparente contraddizione, Agostino mette a punto una fondamentale distinzione tra due specie di *timor*, “entrambe buone, ma delle quali una è segno (non certo causa) del peccato, l’altra segno della grazia. In base alle metafore usate per illustrare la differenza tra le due specie, esse assumono le denominazioni di *servilis-filialis*, *servilis-amicalis*, oppure di *servilis-castus*”.⁴¹ Secondo Agostino il timor *servilis* consiste nella paura del castigo di Dio, e quindi spinge a pentirsi e desiderare l’amore divino, mentre il *timor filialis* consiste nella paura di perdere lo stesso amore di Dio una volta che lo si è raggiunto, di essere abbandonati da Dio, e quindi non viene mai meno nell’animo del buon cristiano. Per chiarire questa differenza Agostino introduce l’esempio della *mulier infidelis* e della *mulier casta*: entrambe temono il marito, ma per ragioni opposte: la moglie infedele, consapevole della propria condotta colpevole, teme la sua punizione, invece la moglie fedele, pur non avendo alcuna colpa, teme comunque di perderne l’amore. Si veda il passo dell’*In Epistolam Joannis ad Partos* immediatamente successivo a quello appena citato:⁴²

Ecce inspiravit et implevit duo corda, duo ora, movit duas linguas Spiritus Dei: et audivimus ex una lingua, “Timor non est in caritate, sed perfecta caritas foras

mittit timorem;” audivimus ex alia: Timor Domini castus, permanens in saeculum saeculi. Quid est hoc? quasi dissonant? Non: excute aures, intende melodiam. Non sine causa hic addidit, castus, illic non addidit: nisi quia est timor alius qui dicitur castus, est autem alius qui non dicitur castus. Discernamus istos duos timores, et intellegamus consonantiam tibiaram. Quomodo intellegimus, vel quomodo discernimus? Attendat Caritas vestra. Sunt homines qui propterea timent Deum, ne mittantur in gehennam, ne forte ardeant cum diabolo in igne aeterno. Ipse est timor ille qui introducit caritatem: sed sic venit ut exeat. Si enim adhuc propter poenas times Deum, nondum amas quem sic times. Non bona desideras, sed mala caves. Sed ex eo quod mala caves, corrigis te, et incipis bona desiderare. Cum bona desiderare coeperis, erit in te timor castus. Quis est timor castus? Ne amittas ipsa bona. Intendite. Aliud est timere Deum, ne mittat te in gehennam cum diabolo; aliud est timere Deum, ne recedat a te. Ille timor quo times ne in gehennam mittaris cum diabolo, nondum est castus; non enim venit ex amore Dei, sed ex timore poenae: cum autem times Deum, ne deserat te praesentia eius; amplecteris eum, ipso frui desideras.

Behold, this Spirit of God hath breathed into and filled two hearts, hath moved two tongues: and we have heard from the one tongue, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear;” we have heard from the other, “The fear of the Lord is chaste, enduring for ever.” How is this? The notes seem to jar. Not so: rouse thine ears: mark the melody. It is not without cause that in the one place there is added that word, chaste, in the other it is not added: but because there is one fear which is called chaste, and there is another fear which is not called chaste. Let us mark the difference between these two fears, and so understand the harmony of the flutes. How are we to understand, or how to distinguish? Mark, my beloved. There are men who fear God, lest they be cast into hell, lest haply they burn with the devil in everlasting fire. This is the fear which introduces charity: but it comes that it may depart. For if thou as yet fearest God because of punishments, not yet dost thou love Him whom thou in such sort fearest. Thou dost not desire the good things, but art afraid of the evil things. Yet because thou art afraid of the evil things, thou correctest thyself and beginnest to desire the good things. When once thou hast begun to desire the good, there shall be in thee the chaste fear. What is the chaste fear? The fear lest thou lose the good things themselves. Mark! It is one thing to fear God lest He cast thee into hell with the devil, and another thing to fear God lest He forsake thee. The fear by which thou fearest lest thou be cast into hell with the devil, is not yet chaste; for it comes not from the love of God, but from the fear of punishment: but when thou fearest God lest His presence forsake thee, thou embracest Him, thou longest to enjoy God Himself.

Nella speculazione filosofica successiva, da Gregorio Magno, che celebra il *timor* come uno dei sette doni dello Spirito Santo, fino alla Scolastica, la classificazione agostiniana del timore diviene oggetto di costante

discussione, come dimostra l'alto numero di *quaestiones* dedicate a tale problema.⁴³

Un intervento decisivo, non solo ai fini della sistemazione tomistica ma anche del nostro discorso, è quello di Pietro Lombardo, che, sempre al fine di conciliare le diverse implicazioni teologiche e morali del timore, arriva a formulare una classificazione quadripartita, aggiungendo il *timor humanus* o *mondanus*, che spinge l'uomo al peccato, e—cosa che qui maggiormente interessa—il *timor initialis*, che presenta come un misto di *timor servilis* e *timor filialis*. La nozione di *timor initialis* viene accolta e valorizzata in più luoghi da Tommaso: oltre che nel commento alle stesse *Sententiae* di Pietro Lombardo, in quello *Super epistolam ad Romanos* (8, 3) e nella *Summa Theologiae* (II-II, q. 19). Questi i passi più rilevanti:⁴⁴

Est autem tertius timor qui refugit malum quod opponitur bono spirituali, scilicet peccata vel separationem a Deo, et hoc quidem timet incurrere ex iusta Dei vindicta. Et sic quantum ad utrumque obiectum respicit rem spiritualem, sed tamen cum hoc habet oculum ad poenam. Et iste timor dicitur esse initialis, quia solet esse in hominibus in initio suae conversionis. Timent enim poenam propter peccata praeterita et timent separari a Deo per peccatum propter gratiam charitati infusam. Et de hoc dicitur in Ps. CX, 10: initium sapientiae timor domini. Est autem quartus timor, qui ex utraque parte oculum habet solum ad rem spiritualem, quia nihil timet nisi a Deo separari. Et iste timor est sanctus qui permanet in saeculum saeculi, ut in Psalmo dicitur. Sicut autem timor initialis causatur ex charitate imperfecta: ita hic timor causatur ex charitate perfecta. I Io. IV, 18: perfecta charitas foras mittit timorem. Et ideo timor initialis et timor castus non distinguuntur contra amorem charitatis, qui est causa utriusque, sed solum timor poenae; quia sicut hic timor facit servitutem, ita amor charitatis facit libertatem filiorum (Rom. 8, 3).

There is a third type of fear which recoils from evil opposed to a spiritual good, namely, from sin or separation from God, which a person fears to incur from the just vengeance of God. Thus it bears on spiritual goods, but with an eye on punishment. This is called initial fear, because it is usually found in men at the beginning of their conversion. For it fears punishment due to past sins and it fears separation from God through sin because of grace infused with charity. This is the fear mentioned in Ps 111:10: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The fourth type of fear has its eye entirely on spiritual things, because it fears nothing except separation from God. This is holy fear which endures forever," as it says in Ps 19:9. But just as initial fear is caused by imperfect love, so this fear is caused by perfect love: "Perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). For this reason initial fear and chaste fear are not distinguished against charity's love which is the cause of both, but the fear of punishment is; because just as this fear produces slavery, so charity's love produces the freedom of sons.

Sed timor initialis est principium dilectionis, secundum illud Eccli. XXV, timor domini initium est dilectionis; Respondeo dicendum quod timor initialis dicitur ex eo quod est initium. Sed cum et timor servilis et timor filialis sint aliquo modo initium sapientiae, uterque potest aliquo modo initialis dici. Sed sic non accipitur initialis secundum quod distinguitur a timore servili et filiali. Sed accipitur secundum quod competit statui incipientium, in quibus inchoatur quidam timor filialis per inchoationem caritatis; non tamen est in eis timor filialis perfecte, quia nondum pervenerunt ad perfectionem caritatis. Et ideo timor initialis hoc modo se habet ad filialem, sicut caritas imperfecta ad perfectam. [a. 8, ad. 2]: Qui secundum substantiam manet quidem cum caritate, servilitate remota, sed actus eius manet quidem cum caritate imperfecta in eo qui non solum movetur ad bene agendum ex amore iustitiae, sed etiam ex timore poenae; sed iste actus cessat in eo qui habet caritatem perfectam, quae foras mittit timorem habentem poenam, ut dicitur I Ioan. IV (ST II-II, q. 19, a. 8, arg. 1).

Now initial fear is the beginning of love, according to Eccles. 25, "The fear of God is the beginning of love;" . . . I answer that, Initial fear is so called because it is a beginning. Since, however, both servile and filial fear are, in some way, the beginning of wisdom, each may be called in some way, initial. . . . It is not in this sense, however, that we are to understand initial fear in so far as it is distinct from servile and filial fear, but in the sense according to which it belongs to the state of beginners, in whom there is a beginning of filial fear resulting from a beginning of charity, although they do not possess the perfection of filial fear, because they have not yet attained to the perfection of charity. Consequently initial fear stands in the same relation to filial fear as imperfect to perfect charity. . . . For this servile fear, as to its substance, remains indeed, with charity, its servility being cast aside; whereas it's act remains with imperfect charity in the man who is moved to perform good actions not only through love of justice, but also through fear of punishment, though this same act ceases in the man who has perfect charity, which "casteth out fear," according to 1 John 4.

Come spiega Tommaso, il *timor initialis* è definito così perché "solet esse in hominibus in initio suae conversionis". Durante la fase iniziale di conversione dal peccato alla grazia, il penitente agisce mosso dalla paura, che è in parte timore delle pene, in parte timore di perdere l'amore di Dio e di rimanere quindi per sempre separati da lui, ossia di essere condannati alla dannazione eterna. In questo senso, come aveva osservato Pietro Lombardo, si manifesta in tale timore tanto una componente di *timor servilis* quanto una componente di *timor filialis*. Tommaso insiste molto sul fatto che questa duplice natura impedisca a tale paura di essere identificata completamente nell'uno o nell'altro tipo fissato da Agostino. Ma il suo carattere di fondo, che è anche il dato che qui più importa, è che tale paura "est principium

dilectionis” ed “accipitur secundum quod competit statui incipientium”, ovvero viene esperita dall’uomo al principio del suo percorso di redenzione che lo conduce a ricevere la grazia dell’amore divino.

Se, come dimostrato da Singleton, il prologo della *Commedia* mette in scena una conversione, la “conversio anime de luctu et miseria peccati ad statum gratie”, la paura che assale Dante al principio del suo cammino di redenzione, nel momento in cui prende coscienza del proprio stato di peccato, si identifica appieno con il *timor initialis*, che—spiega Tommaso—“solet esse in hominibus in initio suae conversionis ad Deum”.

“Che m’avea di paura il cor compunto”: la *compunctio timoris*

Procedendo nel suo racconto, Dante, per tornare a riferirsi alla paura iniziale, adotta però un’espressione ben precisa: “m’avea di paura il cor compunto” (15). L’idea di contrizione insita nel verbo *compungere*, su cui ci siamo soffermati sopra, corrisponde assai bene al peculiare valore morale del *timor initialis*, che scaturisce appunto dalla presa di coscienza delle proprie colpe. Ma il riferimento dantesco è in realtà ancora più specifico.

Se si torna al passo dell’*In Epistolam Joannis ad Partos* citato sopra, ci si accorge che nel seguito del suo discorso Agostino afferma che la paura che accompagna il riconoscimento dei propri peccati *compunge* dolorosamente la coscienza del peccatore (“Quid est, non *compungar*? Non sit quod stimulet conscientiam meam . . .”), purificandola e preparandola ad accogliere l’amore divino, così come i ferri del medico puliscono dolorosamente la ferita perché guarisca e si cicatrizzi (cfr. *In Epistolam Joannis ad Partos* 9.4).⁴⁵

Torquet cor conscientia peccatorum, nondum facta est iustificatio. Est ibi quod titillet, quod pungat. . . . Ideo in Psalmo de ipsa perfectione iustitiae quid dicit? Convertisti luctum meum in gaudium mihi: concidisti saccum meum, et cinxisti me laetitia; ut cantet tibi gloria mea, et non compungar 18. *Quid est, non compungar? Non sit quod stimulet conscientiam meam. Stimulat timor: sed noli timere; intrat caritas quae sanat quod vulnerat timor.* Timor Dei sic vulnerat, quomodo medici ferramentum; putredinem tollit, et quasi videtur vulnus augere. Ecce putredo quando erat in corpore, minus erat vulnus, sed periculosum: accedit ferramentum medici; minus dolebat illud vulnus, quam dolet modo cum secatur. Plus dolet cum curatur, quam si non curaretur; sed ideo plus dolet accedente medicina, ut nunquam doleat succedente salute. *Occupet ergo cor tuum timor, ut inducat caritatem; succedat cicatrix ferramento medici.* Talis est medicus, ut nec cicatrices appareant: tu tantum subde te dexteræ ipsius.

The consciousness of sins torments the heart: justification has not yet taken place. There is that in it which itches, which pricks. Accordingly in the Psalm what saith he concerning this same perfection of righteousness? "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into joy: Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing to thee, and that I be not pricked." What is this, "That I be not pricked?" That there be not that which shall goad my conscience. Fear doth goad: but fear not thou: charity enters in, and she heals the wound that fear inflicts. The fear of God so wounds as doth the leech's knife; it takes away the rottenness, and seems to make the wound greater. Behold, when the rottenness was in the body, the wound was less, but perilous: then comes the knife; the wound smarted less than it smarts now while the leech is cutting it. It smarts more while he is operating upon it than it would if it were not operated upon; it smarts more under the healing operation, but only that it may never smart when the healing is effected. Then let fear occupy thine heart, that it may bring in charity; let the cicatrice succeed to the leech's knife. He is such an Healer, that the cicatrices do not even appear: only do thou put thyself under His hand.

A partire probabilmente proprio da questa efficace metafora agostiniana, nella successiva riflessione teologica viene individuata, e progressivamente si afferma, una precisa nozione che prende il nome di *compunctio formidinis* o *timoris*, e che corrisponde al primo passo del percorso penitenziale, ovvero ad un'ulteriore specificazione del *timor initialis*: "according to the standard doctrine . . . the compunction of fear and distress is the first stage of spiritual progress which draws the soul to hope and love".⁴⁶ Basti qui rinviare a Gregorio Magno, che più di ogni altro ha insistito sull'importanza della *perfecta compunctio timoris* come premessa necessaria alla *compunctio amoris*. Gregorio spiega che solo quando, pungolato dal tormento della paura del castigo eterno, l'animo avrà espiato le proprie colpe, giungendo così a sperare nel perdono divino, potrà infiammarsi dell'amore della grazia (*Dialogi* III, 34, 1-3):⁴⁷

GREGORIUS. In multas species, compunctio dividitur, quando singulae quaeque a poenitentibus culpa planguntur. Unde ex voce quoque poenitentium Ieremias ait: "Divisiones aquarum deduxit oculus meus" (*Thren.* III 48). Principaliter vero compunctionis genera duo sunt, quia Deum sitiens anima prius timore compungitur, post amore. Prius enim sese in lacrymis afficit, quia dum malorum suorum recolit, pro his perpeti aeterna supplicia pertimescit. At vero cum longa moeroris anxietudine fuerit formido consumpta, quaedam iam de praesumptione veniae securitas nascitur, et in amore coelestium gaudiorum animus inflammatur, et qui prius flebat ne duceretur ad supplicium, postmodum amarissime flere incipit, quia differtur a regno. Contemplatur etenim mens qui sint illi angelorum chori, quae ipsa societas beatorum spirituum, quae maiestas aeternae visionis Dei; et amplius plangit quia a bonis perennibus

deest, quam flevit prius cum mala aeterna metuebat. 3. *Sicque fit ut perfecta compunctio formidinis, trahat animum compunctioni dilectionis.*

GREGORY. Compunction is divided into many kinds: to wit, when every sin is of penitent men in particular bewailed: whereof the prophet Jeremy, in the person of penitent sinners, speaketh thus: Mine eye hath brought forth divisions of waters.³⁶ But speaking more properly, there be especially two kinds of compunction: for the soul that thirsteth after God is first sorrowful in [162 heart for fear, and afterward upon love. For first it is grieved and weepeth, because, calling to mind former sins committed, it feareth to endure for punishment of them everlasting torments: but when long anxiety and sorrow hath banished away that fear, then a certain security of the hope of pardon doth follow: and so the soul is inflamed with the love of heavenly delights, and whereas before it did weep for fear of eternal pain, afterward it poureth out tears, that it is kept from everlasting joys. For the soul doth then contemplate those glittering quires of Angels, that heavenly company of those blessed spirits, that great majesty of the eternal beholding the face of God; and doth lament so much more now, because it wanteth that everlasting felicity, than it wept before at the fear of eternal punishment.

Quando, all'inizio del poema, Dante, rievocando l'angoscia che ha accompagnato la presa di coscienza del suo smarrimento e che lo ha spinto a muovere i primi passi del lungo viaggio verso la salvezza, precisa che il suo cuore è stato "compunto di paura", cita di fatto alla lettera proprio quella *compunctio timoris* che, secondo i padri della chiesa, costituisce il principio necessario del cammino di ogni uomo verso l'amore divino.

Che sia proprio questo il significato teologico della paura iniziale trova conferma in un ultimo dato. Dante, nei medesimi versi d'esordio, ricorda inoltre come l'angosciosa contrizione provata nella selva gli avesse procurato un'insostenibile amarezza: "tant' è amara che poco più è morte" (v. 7). Per giustificare tale specifica qualità di quel pauroso senso di smarrimento, la critica è solita rimandare alla definizione agostiniana del mondo come "amara silva".⁴⁸ Ma, anche in questo caso, la scelta dell'aggettivo è ben più pregnante. Per i teologi cristiani l'amarezza è il sentimento che scaturisce dalla compunzione della paura. Un altro maestro assai caro a Dante, Riccardo di san Vittore, nel suo *De gratia contemplationis*, dopo aver pure riconosciuto nell'esperienza della *compunctio timoris* il principio ineludibile della ricerca della grazia (2.17: "Prius autem omnis homo compungitur timore, postmodum vero compungitur ex amore"),⁴⁹ spiega infatti

che, così come la dolcezza contraddistingue il raggiungimento finale dell'amore divino ("compunctio amoris dulcedinem habet"), proprio l'amarrezza accompagna la paura che si origina dalla coscienza dei propri peccati: "*compunctio timoris amaritudinem habet*".

In conclusione, possiamo quindi affermare che anche la *passio* della paura, che occupa un ruolo tanto centrale nel racconto del principio del viaggio, deve essere letta e integrata nell'ambito del sistema di valori allegorici e teologici su cui è costruito il prologo della *Commedia*. Dante fonda la rappresentazione della conversione che gli permette di intraprendere il suo cammino salvifico sulla messa in scena di una basilare nozione della teologia del pentimento: la *compunctio timoris* (tradotta pressoché alla lettera nell'immagine del cuore «compunto di paura» del v. 15), che, con il suo carico d'amarrezza, costituisce, secondo una dottrina codificata dai maggiori filosofi cristiani, il momento iniziale del percorso di redenzione di ogni credente ("solet esse in hominibus in initio suae conversionis ad Deum"). Solo alla luce di tali significati si può comprendere come la costruzione narrativa della scena del prologo, in apparenza così disorientante per il lettore moderno, sia proiezione della vicenda etica e psicologica del protagonista. E ancora una volta prendere atto dell'irriducibile coerenza e 'verosimiglianza' dell'invenzione dantesca.⁵⁰

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NOTE

1. I soli dati lessicali sono di per sé indicativi: nei primi due canti il sostantivo *paura* ricorre sei volte (*Inf.* 1.6, 15, 19, 44, 53; 2.63), cui si aggiunge un'occorrenza di *pauroso* in 2.90 (si consideri che i rimanenti novantotto canti della *Commedia* annoverano tutti assieme ventiquattro occorrenze di *paura* e corradicali); il verbo *temere* e corradicali presentano sei occorrenze (*Inf.* 2.35, 49, 64, 87, 88, 90), contro le quarantadue complessive del resto della *Commedia*. A queste si aggiungono inoltre due occorrenze di *tremare* (2.48 e 90) e due di *viltà* (2.45 e 122), che appartengono al medesimo campo semantico. Si noti che in questi canti si registra anche una precisa caratterizzazione semantica dei due lemmi: *paura* è sempre riferito alla condizione di forte angoscia esperita da Dante nella selva e nell'incontro con le fiere (la sua manifestazione è il *tremore*); invece *temere*|*tema* è adoperato per esprimere il timore di intraprendere il viaggio, qualificato da Virgilio come *viltà*, e in relazione a Beatrice. Questa specializzazione semantica è tutt'altro che ovvia: nella tradizione lirica duecentesca, così come in quella trobadorica, i due termini sono adoperati indistintamente per esprimere gli stessi generi di 'paura', come ad es. il *timor amantis* di ascendenza ovidiana; si veda in proposito Roberto Rea, *Cavalcanti poeta. Uno studio sul lessico lirico* (Roma: Nuova Cultura, 2008), 62–96; 369–73; 419–22.

2. La rappresentazione della paura come emozione rivissuta attraverso il ricordo è un procedimento caratteristico dell'*Inferno* (cfr. in part. 3.131–32; 14.76–78; 22.31; 24.84; 28.112–18; 32.71–72; 34.10), che ha, tra l'altro, la specifica funzione di inverare il racconto dantesco; si veda in proposito Chandler B. Beall, "Dante and His Reader", *Forum Italicum* 13 (1979): 299–343 (in part. 303–307) e Lina Bolzoni, "Dante o della memoria appassionata", *Lettere Italiane* 60.2 (2008): 169–93.

3. Le citazioni dalla *Commedia* sono tratte da Dante Alighieri, *Commedia. Inferno*, ed. Giorgio Inglese (Roma: Carocci, 2007). I rinvii ai commentatori della *Commedia*, quando non diversamente specificato, sono da intendersi *ad locum*. I corsivi all'interno delle citazioni, dantesche e non, sono sempre miei.

4. L'immagine dell'animo in fuga non è altro che una messa in scena della definizione agostiniana della paura come "fuga animi", cfr. *In epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos* 46.8: "Fuga animi timor est"; e si veda anche Tommaso ST II-II, q. 125 a. 1 citato più avanti. Lo comprende bene Boccaccio, che, a proposito dell'immagine dantesca, nota "iscampato, con più riposato giudicio vede quante cose poteano la sua salute impedire e, quasi in esso fosse, molto più teme che non facea quando v'era: e però seguita, adattando sé alla comparazione: 'Così l'animo mio ch'ancor fuggiva', cioè che ancora scampato esser non gli pareva, ma, come se nel pericolo fosse ancora, di fuggire si sforzava", cfr. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia di Dante*, ed. Giorgio Padoan, in *Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*, vol. 6, ed. Vittore Branca (Milano: Mondadori, 1965).

5. La definizione 'episodio emozionale' dà conto, meglio del termine 'emozione', della struttura componenziale che caratterizza i processi emotivi; si veda almeno Klaus Scherer, "What Are Emotions? And How Can They Be Measured?", *Social Science Information* 44.4 (2005): 695–729; e la discussione della stessa proposta di Scherer da parte di altri autorevoli specialisti di psicologia delle emozioni nella sezione "Defining emotions", della *Emotion Review* 4.2 (2010): 363–385.

6. Così Saverio Bellomo, "Una selva oscura: il prologo della 'Commedia'", in "Le donne, i cavalieri, l'arme, gli amori": *Poema e romanzo: La narrativa lunga in Italia*, ed. Francesco Bruni (Venezia: Marsilio, 2001), 43–57. Sull'incipit *in medias res* della *Commedia* si vedano inoltre le osservazioni di Teodolinda Barolini, *The Undivine Comedy. Detheologizing Dante* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 21–47.

7. Soli pochi studiosi si sono posti il problema, rilevando come la domanda di Virgilio risulti tutt'altro che pertinente. Teodolinda Barolini ha osservato che "Vergil's question to Beatrice . . . is not required by the 'plot' of *Inf.* 2, i.e., the concern to justify the pilgrim's voyage, and seems to exist in order to provide the poet an opportunity to establish certain ground rules about hell before proceeding any further" (Barolini, *The Undivine Comedy*, 277). Antonino Pagliaro, notando che "la richiesta per sé potrebbe apparire ingenua e superflua e, comunque, non così importante da sostituire il suo oggetto alle istruzioni, che Beatrice avrebbe potuto aggiungere", propone di intenderla nel senso di "per mandato di quale potere tu puoi venire qui, senza timore di danno", in Antonino Pagliaro, *Commento incompiuto all'Inferno di Dante. Canti I-XXVI*, ed. Giovanni Lombardo (Roma: Herder, 1999), 42; ma la domanda di Virgilio e la risposta di Beatrice sono specificatamente incentrate sulla questione del timore.

8. Come notò per primo Boccaccio, rinviando a *Eth.* III 9 349, parafrasato e commentato da Tommaso, *In Eth. expositio* III, xiv, 528–534 "Dicit ergo primo, quod terribilia sunt quae timemus, quasi timoris obiecta. Huiusmodi autem sunt, ut universaliter dicatur, quaecumque mala. Unde et philosophi definiunt timorem, dicentes quod est expectatio mali. Et sumitur hic expectatio communiter pro quolibet motu appetitus in aliquod futurum; cum tamen expectatio proprie loquendo non sit nisi boni, sicut nec spes", su cui cfr. Edward Moore, "Studies in Dante", 4 voll. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), vol. 1.282–285.

9. Come tale è codificato sia nella tradizione lirica (cfr. Rea, "Cavalcanti poeta" cit., 62–96) sia in quella religiosa (cfr. Vittorio Russo, "'Timor', 'audacia' e 'fortitudo' nel canto II dell' 'Inferno'", *Filologia e letteratura* 11 [1965]: 391–408, e quindi in *Idem*, "Sussidi di esegesi dantesca" [Napoli, Liguori, 1975]: 9–32).

10. Patrick Boyde, "Perception and Passion in Dante's 'Comedy'" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 226.

11. Questo nonostante l'esplicito riferimento contenuto nei titoli di alcuni interventi dedicati al primo canto dell'*Inferno*, come Carlo Ballerini, "Il canto della paura", *L'Albero* 6 (1953): 34-49 e Letterio Cassata, "Tra paura e speranza (il canto I dell'*Inferno*)", *Linguistica e Letteratura* 22 (1997): 11-54, al quale comunque si rimanda per un esame approfondito del canto e per la discussione critica dei numerosi *loci* di incerta interpretazione. Tra i contributi più recenti si segnalano i saggi di Saverio Bellomo, "'Una selva oscura': il prologo della 'Commedia'", cit.; Guglielmo Gorni, "Dante nella selva: il primo canto della *Commedia*" (Firenze: Franco Cesati, 2002); Enrico Malato, "Saggio di una nuova edizione commentata delle opere di Dante. 1. Il canto I dell'*Inferno*" (Roma: Salerno Editrice, 2007).

12. Russo, "'Timor', 'audacia' e 'fortitudo'".

13. Antony K. Cassell, "Failure, Pride and Conversion in *Inferno* I: A Reinterpretation", *Dante Studies* 94 (1976): 1-24; e si veda anche *Idem*, *Inferno I. Lectura Dantis Americana* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1989). Secondo Cassell—che ha comunque il merito di aver cercato di spiegare la paura iniziale mediante modelli teologici (cfr. qui sotto)—la "conversione mancata" messa in scena nel prologo dell'*Inferno* sarebbe da imputare alla superbia di Dante. Ma a me sembra che non ci sia alcuna traccia di superbia nella condotta iniziale del protagonista, che è un uomo smarrito e spaventato, al punto che Virgilio, dopo aver risposto alla sua disperata richiesta di aiuto, di fronte al suo timore di intraprendere il viaggio oltremondano, lo accusa esplicitamente di pusillanimità (*Inf.* 2.43: "l'anima tua è da viltade offesa"), che è l'opposto della superbia. Inoltre, per difendere tale tesi, Cassell opera una serie di forzature della lettera del testo, come la spiegazione di "mi ritrovai" di *Inf.* 1.2 nel senso di "he found himself yet again" (sul significato di questo importante verbo si veda più avanti) o quella dell'indefinito "altrui" del successivo v. 18 (propriamente "ogni uomo, ognuno") come "'Others' are led aright by the sun but not the Wayfarer" (p. 10).

14. Intendo esaminare in altra sede le rimanenti rappresentazioni della paura nel prologo infernale evidenziate sopra (il rapporto tra paura e memoria; la paura delle tre fiere; il timore di intraprendere il viaggio); tali studi, assieme al presente saggio, fanno parte di una più ampia ricerca sulla *passio* della paura nella *Commedia* e nella letteratura medievale.

15. Boyde, "Passion", 219.

16. L'unico a distaccarsi in modo significativo da tale approccio è stato De Negri nella sua rilettura del viaggio dantesco sotto il segno della teologia penitenziale, che ha forse riscosso presso la critica dantesca meno attenzione di quanta ne meritasse (Enrico De Negri "L'*Inferno* di Dante e la teologia penitenziale", *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia* s. 3, vol. 4.1 [1974], 189-223, in part. 216-223). Si tratta di un'interpretazione che coinvolge un po' tutti i nodi cruciali del primo canto (tra cui il rapporto fra libero arbitrio e grazia; e il significato simbolico di Virgilio e delle tre fiere), ma, almeno per quel che riguarda il riconoscimento del legame di fondo tra la paura e teologia del pentimento mi sembra senz'altro fondata, anche se, come cercherò di mostrare più avanti, la nozione cui fa riferimento Dante al principio del poema è, a mio avviso, ben più specifica di quella di *timor servilis*, la paura del castigo divino, che, secondo De Negri, accompagnerebbe il poeta per l'intero percorso infernale, quindi per tutto il suo cammino penitenziale.

17. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, ed. Charles S. Singleton, 6 voll. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970-75). Tra gli altri commentatori tale indicazione è stata ripresa soltanto da Nicola Fosca nel suo commento *on line* alla *Commedia* (<<http://dante.dartmouth.edu>>). Cassell, "Failure, Pride and Conversion", pur muovendo, sulla scia del medesimo Singleton (ma anche di De Negri), dall'idea che "Dante's paura must figure more than a passion" e rinviando quindi al ruolo "positivo" della paura nell'esegesi cristiana, subordina tale intuizione alla sua interpretazione di fondo, concludendo che la colpa di Dante nei primi due canti sarebbe quella di una "lack of fear" (p. 16), che, come evidenziato sopra, a me sembra davvero l'ultima delle accuse che si possono muovere a Dante-personaggio nel prologo dell'*Inferno*.

18. John Freccero, *Dante. The Poetics of Conversion*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 29-54.

19. Del resto, se la selva indica la vita mondana oscurata dal peccato, "nella selva, in un certo senso, ognuno già si trova, perché vive, ma altra cosa è essere soltanto preda della selva, della sua oscurità, e altro è il ritrovarsi in essa con l'ansia di uscirne e lo sgomento di aver perduto la via: ciò è

già come un improvviso risveglio, il destarsi dentro di un lume”, così Antonino Pagliaro, “Il Pro-emio”, in *Ulisse. Ricerche semantiche sulla Divina Commedia*, 2 voll. (Firenze: D’Anna, 1966), I, 1–69, a p. 13.

20. Giovanni Pascoli, “Intorno alla Minerva Oscura”, in *Scritti danteschi*, ed. Augusti Vicinelli (Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1952), 252. Hanno ben specificato il senso del verbo gli ultimi commentatori: Dante Alighieri, *Commedia*, con il commento di Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi (Milano: Zanichelli, 2001) e Dante Alighieri, *Commedia. Inferno*, ed. Giorgio Inglese.

21. Come nel resto del canto, anche nel caso dell’immagine del sonno il senso allegorico tende ad imporsi su quello letterale, come risultò chiaro già all’Ottimo: “però che la dilezione sensitiva tiene la umanitate sì addormentata, che non si sente, si entra ne’ vizj; d[ice] che era pieno di sonno, cioè non adoperante virtù. Il sonoglioso molte volte erra la via. Sonno è imagine di morte; e però uscìo del cammino, ed entrò nella selva”. Altri antichi commentatori, a partire da Guido da Pisa, avevano invece optato per un’interpretazione letterale del sonno come “sonno fisico”, vedendo in questi versi una prova del riconoscimento della visione dantesca come “visio per somnium”: “Hic manifeste apparet quod suas visiones in somno finxerit vidisse” (*Guido da Pisa’s Expositiones et Glose super Comediam Dantis, or Commentary on Dante’s Inferno*, edited by Vincenzo Cioffari (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974): “It is clear that he imagines that he had a dream-vision”).

22. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, ed. Ch. Singleton.

23. Guglielmo Maramauro, *Expositione sopra l’“Inferno” di Dante Alighieri*, ed. Giacomo Pisoni e Saverio Bellomo (Padova: Antenore, 1998): “E dice apresso RITROVAI, cioè ‘un’altra volta mi trovai’. E questo dice Dante però che esso tal volta, intra questo intervallo de tempo, ebbe alcuna consideratione de stato de penitentia, ma pur al fin la voluntate lo reducea a peccare lasando la ragione”.

24. Cassell, “*Inferno I*”, cit., 8–14, a p. 9, cui comunque si rimanda per una rassegna delle diverse spiegazioni e parafrasi del verbo.

25. *Commento di Francesco da Buti sopra La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri*, ed. Crescentino Giannini (Pisa: Fratelli Nistri, 1858–62).

26. Si ricordi che già a proposito dell’indicazione cronologica incipitaria indicante il mezzo della vita umana come inizio del viaggio ultraterreno, Mercuri ha evidenziato come, rispetto al soggiacente passo di *Is* 38.10 “in dimidium dierum meorum vadam ad portas inferi” (spiegato nell’esegesi con il fatto che i peccatori, incapaci di pentirsi, muoiono nel mezzo della vita), questa individui “il momento della penitenza”, quindi “Dante si presenta come esempio di peccatore che si pente, in antitesi al peccatore che percorre la via della perdizione fino alla morte”, cfr. Roberto Mercuri, “Semantica di Gerione” (Roma: Bulzoni, 1984), 87–88.

27. Cfr. Boccaccio, *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia di Dante*.

28. Si veda rispettivamente Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia*, ed. Natalino Sapegno (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1968); Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia*, ed. Umberto Bosco e Giovanni Reggio (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1979); Dante Alighieri, *Commedia*, ed. Emilio Pasquini e Antonio Quaglio (Milano: Garzanti, 1982).

29. Cfr. Francesco Mazzoni, “Saggio di un nuovo commento alla *Divina Commedia*” (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1967), 61; Dante Alighieri, *Commedia*, ed. A. Chiavacci Leonardi, 7; Dante Alighieri, *Commedia. Inferno*, ed. G. Inglese.

30. L’unica eccezione a questa specifica semantica parrebbe costituita da *Inf.* 7.36: “E io, ch’avea lo cor quasi compunto”, dove sembra indicare un sentimento di compassione per la pena degli avari e dei prodighi. Tuttavia, considerato che il supplizio non sembra tanto terribile da giustificare tale inconsueto moto di commozione (peraltro incongruente con l’attitudine del protagonista nel resto del canto), nonché la partecipata esclamazione dei vv. 19–21, non è da escludere del tutto che anche qui il verbo possa significare ‘provai quasi un doloroso senso di colpa’, rimandando ad una possibile cedimento di Dante verso il peccato di cupidigia (non si dimentichi che è la lupa che ricaccia Dante verso la selva del peccato). Così aveva infatti interpretato Boccaccio: “Ed io, ch’avea lo cuor quasi compunto, di compassione, la quale portava a tanta fatica e a tanto tormento, quanto quello era il quale nel percuotersi sofferivano; e, oltre a ciò, aveva la compunzione per lo vermine della coscienza, il quale il rodeva, cognoscendosi di questa colpa esser peccatore: il che esso assai chiaramente dimostra nel primo

canto, dove dice il suo viaggio essere stato impedito dalla lupa, cioè dall'avarizia. E in questo è da comprendere invano esser da noi conosciuti i vizi e' peccati, se, sentendoci involuppati in quegli o poco o molto, noi non abbiām dolore e compunzione; né osta il dire: "Come avea l'autore compunzione dell'essere avaro, che ancora, come nelle seguenti parole apare, non sapea chi essi si fossero?", per ciò che qui usa l'autore una figura chiamata "preoccupazione" (Boccaccio, *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia di Dante*, cit.). Dei commentatori moderni nessuno riprende l'idea di Boccaccio, ma rimane comunque la difficoltà di giustificare il moto di pietà di Dante (in genere i commentatori insistono sul valore attenuativo del "quasi"). Mi propongo di verificare questa ipotesi in altra sede.

31. Cfr. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia di Dante*, cit.

32. Così Malato, "Saggio di una nuova edizione commentata", cit., 18, e prima di lui Cassata, "Tra paura e speranza (il canto I dell'*Inferno*)", cit., 27. La maggioranza dei commentatori intende invece il verso come un riferimento a Virgilio, che però, stando alla narrazione, Dante incontra fuori della selva, ai piedi del colle, come del resto osservava già Sapegno: "è probabile che il bene sia il soccorso inviatogli dal cielo, per mezzo di Virgilio, e 'l'altre cose', le tre fiere di cui discorrerà nei versi seguenti; ma a dire il vero, né quello né queste li trova, propriamente, nella selva" (Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia*, ed. Natalino Sapegno).

33. Pietro Alighieri, *Comentum super poema Comedie Dantis: A Critical Edition of the Third and Final Draft of Pietro Alighieri's 'Commentary on Dante's 'Divine Comedy''*, ed. Massimiliano Chiamenti (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002).

34. Benedetto Croce, *La poesia di Dante* (Bari: Laterza, 1921), 73; e si vedano le osservazioni in proposito di Cassata, "Tra paura e speranza (il canto I dell'*Inferno*)", 22-23. Si noti inoltre che, anche dal punto di vista delle reazioni emozionali, il seguito del canto, in termini di realismo della rappresentazione, ha suscitato diverse perplessità. Ancor prima di Croce, non è infatti mancato, chi, proprio riguardo la rappresentazione della paura, non ha passato sotto silenzio le incongruenze psicologiche che caratterizzano le reazioni del protagonista di fronte all'apparizione delle fiere e di Virgilio. Saverio Bellomo ha recentemente ricordato le parole ironiche di Ludovico Castelvetro: "Sicuro cuore doveva essere per certo quello di Dante, che, trovandosi in un deserto, solo, intorniato da fiere spaventosissime, non si spaventa all'apparizione di un morto, né gli si rabbuffano i peli, né perde la voce, né un freddo gli corre per le ossa. Le quali cose sogliono in simile caso avvenire a' più forti uomini del mondo" (Bellomo, "Una selva oscura: il prologo della 'Commedia'", 43).

35. Il riferimento è al celebre saggio di Ch. S. Singleton, "In exitu Israel de Aegypto", *Annual Report of the Dante Society* 78 (1960): 1-24; e si veda pure, per quanto osservato qui di seguito, il capitolo "The Three Conversions", in *Idem*, "Journey to Beatrice" (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 39-56; cui si aggiunga Freccero, *Dante. The Poetics of Conversion*, cit., 1-28; 29-54.

36. Così R. Quinto, "Per la storia del trattato tomistico *De passionibus animi*. Il timor nella letteratura teologica fra il 1200 e il 1230ca", in E. Manning (ed.), "Thomistica", *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale. Supplementa*, 1 (Leuven: Peeters Pers, 1995), 35-87 (di cui si veda anche l'"Appendice bibliografica" alle pp. 61-71), in part. 42-43, con rinvio a B. Costacurta, "Dalla paura al timore di Dio", in *L'antropologia dei maestri spirituali*, Atti del Simposio dell'Istituto di Spiritualità dell'Università Gregoriana, Roma, 28 aprile-1 maggio 1989, ed. C. A. Bernard (Milano: Edizioni Paoline, 1991), 54-60.

37. In *Sent.* III, d. 34, c. 4 (PL 192.824) Pietro Lombardo divide così la paura: "sciendum est quatuor esse timores: scilicet mundanum sive humanum, servilem, initialem, castum vel filialem sive amicabilem". Si tratta, come si vedrà più avanti, di una suddivisione fondamentale per la definitiva sistemazione tomista delle problematiche inerenti al timor.

38. Per una sintesi più approfondita si rimanda ancora all'ottimo lavoro di Quinto, "Per la storia del trattato tomistico", cit., in part. 44-57, cui si fa qui di seguito più volte riferimento.

39. *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*, ed. R. Weber (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003); testo inglese tratto dal Douay-Rheims a cura di R. Challoner.

40. Cfr. PL 35.2047-48; testo in inglese di H. Browne, *St. Augustin: Ten Homilies on the First Epistle of John* (<DOI 0354-0430).

41. Cfr. Quinto, "Per la storia del trattato tomistico", cit., 45.

42. Cfr. PL 35.2048.

43. Cfr. ancora Quinto, "Per la storia del trattato tomistico", 45.

44. Le citazioni da Tommaso provengono da S. *Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia*, recognovit ac instruxit Enrique Alarcón automato electronico (Pompaelone, ad Universitatis Studiorum Navarrensis aedes, MM), consultabile *on line* all'indirizzo <<http://www.corpusthomaticum.org>>. La traduzione è tratta da Thomas Aquinas, *Letter to the Romans*, trans. Fabian Larcher, ed. Jeremy Holmes with the support of the Aquinas Center for Theological Renewal, http://nvjournal.net/files/Aquinas_on_Romans.pdf.

45. Cfr. PL 35.2048.

46. Cfr. Simo Knuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 202.

47. PL 77.300.

48. Agostino, *In Ioannem* 16.6 "Amara silva mundus hic fuit" (si noti comunque con Bellomo "Una selva oscura": il prologo della 'Commedia', 46, che il contesto della citazione agostiniana non pare molto adeguato al passo dantesco); i commentatori inoltre spesso aggiungono per la comparazione con la morte *Ecdesiaste* 7.27 "Et inveni amariorem morte mulierem".

49. PL 196.98b. Sui rapporti fra Dante e Riccardo di San Vittore mi limito a rimandare agli interventi più recenti di Giuseppe Mazzotta, "Canti XXI-XXII. Contemplazione e Poesia", in *Esperimenti danteschi. Paradiso 2010*, ed. Tommaso Montorfano (Genova-Milano: Marietti, 2010), 201-212; Francesco Zambon, "Canti XXV-XXVI. La scrittura d'Amore", *ibidem*, 247-268; cui si aggiunge ora il volume di Mira Mocan, *L'arca della mente. Riccardo di San Vittore nella Commedia di Dante* (Firenze: Olschki, 2012).

50. Uno dei modelli più convincenti che sono stati proposti per il tentativo di conversione messo in scena nel prologo della *Commedia* è il sermone dedicato da Bernardo di Chiaravalle al cantico di ringraziamento di Ezechia, il cui incipit "In dimidio dierum meorum vadam ad portas inferi" (*Is* 38.10), come da sempre riconosciuto, ha molto probabilmente a sua volta suggerito lo stesso attacco del poema dantesco. Cassata, nel suo "Tra paura e speranza (il canto I dell'*Inferno*)", 17-22, ha mostrato come nell'interpretazione di Bernardo la vicenda esemplare di Ezechia, dal suo ritrovarsi, alla sua prima speranza di salvezza, alle successive ricadute, con conseguente disperazione, fino all'ulteriore intervento della grazia divina, si configura come un perfetto modello per la rappresentazione della condizione iniziale di Dante-personaggio. Attraverso il percorso appena ricostruito, si può ora intendere meglio il significato, e la pertinenza, di tale modello. Appare infatti evidente che anche Bernardo sta facendo riferimento alla *compunctio timoris*, che rappresenta, come abbiamo visto, il primo stadio della conversione: Ezechia viene presentato come un "peccator compunctus", che si riconosce e inizia il suo percorso spirituale attraverso la paura: "Verum qui timore Dei initiatur ad sapientiam, is continuo dimidiat dies suos, exclamans prae timore: 'Vadam ad portas inferi'", patendo l'amarezza senza pari che la contrizione reca con sé: "Amaram passus sum amaritudinem pro peccatis in principio conversionis, unde exclamaui: 'Vadam ad portas inferi'", proprio come accade a Dante nella selva (le citazioni sono tratte da *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, vol. VI, 1. *Sermones III*, ed. J. Leclercq, H. Rochajš [Romae: Editiones Cistercienses, 1970], 86-93).

La prima similitudine della *Commedia* e una fonte romanzesca

GIULIO VANNINI

Una notissima similitudine in *Inferno* 1.22–27, in virtù dell'intensa drammaticità che l'ha resa celebre, ha da sempre attratto l'attenzione degli studiosi, che si sono dati da fare per esplicitare il senso morale ad essa sotteso senza mai rinvenire, tra le fonti predilette dal poeta, un modello plausibile per la figura che la introduce. Mi riferisco all'immagine del naufrago che, fortunatamente scampato alla morte, si volge sbigottito a osservare il mare:

E come quei che con lena affannata,
uscito fuor del pelago a la riva,
si volge a l'acqua perigliosa e guata,
così l'animo mio, ch'ancor fuggiva,
si volse a retro a rimirar lo passo
che non lasciò già mai persona viva.¹

And just like one who, breathless with fatigue
on reaching shore from ocean waters deep,
turns back to look upon the perilous sea,
so did my mind, still pressing on in flight,
turn back to look once more upon the pass
that never let a living soul survive.²

In mancanza di un confronto stringente, si è a lungo ritenuto che l'immagine fosse genuinamente dantesca e ci si è limitati a illustrarne il vivido realismo o a rintracciare i precedenti del mare periglioso come simbolo del “mar sì crudele” del peccato (*Purg.* 1.3) in cui l'uomo tende a smarrirsi.³ Ma, pur essendo congruamente inserita all'interno di una struttura

allegorica fortemente significativa, non è detto che la prima parte della similitudine sia stata elaborata da Dante sulla scorta di testi in cui questo simbolismo era già presente. Non per nulla, in tempi relativamente recenti, è stato additato come suo possibile modello Virgilio, *Eneide* 1.180–85, dove si racconta che Enea, giunto a terra dopo una tempesta con una parte delle sue navi, si arrampica su uno scoglio per cercare altri superstiti e farsi un'idea del luogo in cui si trova:⁴

Aeneas scopulum interea conscendit et omnem
prospectum late pelago petit, Anthea si quem
iactatum vento videat Phrygiasque biremis
aut Capyn aut celsis in puppibus arma Caici.
navem in conspectu nullam, tris litore cervos
prospicit errantis . . .

Aeneas meanwhile climbs up on a rock and seeks
a full view of the sea to find out if he can see
wind tossed Antheus and the Phrygian vessels,
or Capys, or the arms of Caicus high on the stern.
No ship is in view, only three stags roving the shore . . .

Ma a differenza del naufrago dantesco, che si volge verso il mare per un moto istintivo che lo induce a osservare il pericolo da cui si è salvato a stento, l'agire di Enea, giunto a terra con sette navi e molti compagni, è dettato dalla *prudencia*, che lo spinge a cercare eventuali superstiti e gli consente di scovare qualche preda con cui sfamare se stesso e i suoi. Le due descrizioni sono dunque confrontabili solo in parte e pare poco verosimile che, almeno in questo caso, Dante si sia ispirato a Virgilio. Una descrizione molto simile a quella dantesca è tuttavia rintracciabile nel più tardo romanzo latino che ci sia pervenuto, la *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri*, che godette di eccezionale fortuna nel Medioevo e che, come vedremo, potrebbe essere stata il modello che suggerì a Dante l'immagine del naufrago.

La *Historia Apollonii*, che narra le peregrinazioni dello sventurato Apollonio e della sua famiglia nel Mediterraneo orientale, è caratterizzata, come gli altri romanzi antichi, dalla ricorsività di molte situazioni tipiche che sostanziano le avventure dei protagonisti:⁵ anche in essa compaiono rapimenti, processi, tentativi di suicidio, sogni premonitori, e così via, e soprattutto vi si ritrova il *topos* per eccellenza del romanzo antico, quello del viaggio per mare, della tempesta e del naufragio al quale sopravvive

soltanto il protagonista, le cui origini rimontano all'*Odissea*.⁶ Nei primi capitoli, dopo essere sfuggito al perfido re Antioco, che lo perseguita, Apollonio si imbarca per andare a rifugiarsi nella Pentapoli, ma durante il viaggio una tempesta sorprende la sua nave e la fa affondare. Apollonio è l'unico dei passeggeri a salvarsi e raggiunge la riva con l'aiuto di una tavola di legno; e appena giunto a riva si volge a guardare il mare al quale è scampato per miracolo (12 redaz. B):

Apollonius solus beneficio tabulae in Pentapolitanorum est litore pulsus gubernatore pereunte; fortuna proicitur fatigatus in litore Cyrenes. Et dum evomit undas, quas potaverat, intuens mare tranquillum, quod paulo ante turbidum senserat, respiciens fluctus sic ait: "O Neptune, praedator maris, fraudator hominum, innocentium deceptor, tabularum latro, Antiocho rege crudelior, utinam animam abstulisses meam! . . ."

Apollonius was the only one who, thanks to a plank, was cast up on the shore of the Pentapolitans – whereas the helmsman perished – destiny having tossed him on the beach at Cyrenes. And as he was spitting out the water he had ingested, he saw that the sea was now calm, whose turbulence he had endured only a short time before, and looking at the water he said: "O Neptune, plunderer of the sea, who deceives men, beguiles innocents, steals planks, more cruel than King Antiochus, I wish you had carried off my soul! . . ."⁷

Come il naufrago dell'*Inferno*, che si ritrova a riva "con lena affannata", anche Apollonio è *fatigatus*, e, nonostante l'affanno, si volge istintivamente a osservare il mare dal quale si è a stento salvato biasimandolo per la sua pericolosità. Questa rapida descrizione di Apollonio ricorda dunque molto da vicino quella del naufrago dantesco, e una tale somiglianza potrebbe anche essere attribuita al caso, alla felice ma indipendente scelta di rappresentare una reazione istintiva non troppo comune, se la grande fortuna che la *Historia Apollonii* ebbe nel Medioevo in Italia, e nel XIV secolo certamente anche a Firenze, non facesse almeno sospettare che questo romanzo fosse noto a Dante.

In questa sede, la tradizione della *Historia Apollonii* non può essere ripercorsa che per linee generalissime. Basterà tuttavia ricordare che l'opera, la cui versione originaria sembra risalire alla fine del II o agli inizi del III secolo, è giunta fino a noi in numerose redazioni di epoca più tarda: le più antiche, convenzionalmente indicate come "redazione A" e "redazione B", si rifanno a un modello perduto della fine del V o dei primi del VI secolo, e da queste derivano tutte le altre.⁸ I più remoti riferimenti ad

essa risalgono al VI secolo, ma restano sporadici e confinati ad ambienti colti fino all'epoca carolingia, quando l'opera iniziò a diffondersi negli *scriptoria* di gran parte dell'Europa. La semplicità della narrazione, la sua patina cristianizzante, la convinzione che Apollonio fosse un personaggio storico, assicurarono al romanzo una vasta fortuna e fecero sì che, insieme ai manoscritti delle due versioni più antiche, si moltiplicassero quelli di redazioni miste e contaminate e ne nascessero volgarizzamenti e rifacimenti.⁹

In area italiana la presenza dell'opera è attestata a partire dal IX secolo: è dell'863 il testamento con cui Everardo, marchese del Friuli, lascia alla primogenita Engeltrude parte della sua biblioteca comprendente un *Apollonium* e risalgono alla stessa epoca alcuni dei manoscritti più importanti delle diverse redazioni, fra cui il più antico testimone della redazione A (Laurentianus plut. LXVI 40), vergato a Montecassino; verso la fine dell'XI secolo il romanzo è citato come *acta . . . Apollonii* nella *Cronaca di Novalesa*; agli inizi del XII sec. fu scritto nell'Italia centrale un altro importante manoscritto, uno dei principali testimoni della redazione mista C (Vaticanus lat. 1984).¹⁰ Siamo a sette miglia da Firenze quando, sullo scorcio del XII secolo, Arrigo da Settimello, nel *De diversitate fortunae et philosophiae consolatione* (2.217 s.), menziona Apollonio come esempio di uomo travolto dalla sorte, segno che la sua figura doveva essere piuttosto nota. Un secolo più tardi, un riferimento puntuale alla *Historia Apollonii* compare nel poema *L'intelligenza* (st. 73.3–6), composto da un anonimo fiorentino tra la fine del Duecento e i primi del Trecento.¹¹ Alla versione latina aveva verosimilmente accesso Boccaccio, che nel Filocolo (1336–38) ne imita chiaramente un episodio.¹²

Oltre alle altre redazioni, in Italia ebbe particolare diffusione la cosiddetta redazione di Stoccarda,¹³ affine alla redazione B, e da essa furono tratti, nel Trecento, almeno quattro volgarizzamenti.¹⁴ Di questi, il *Libro d'Apollonio* fu confezionato a Firenze entro la prima metà del secolo, ma all'orbita fiorentina sembrano da ricondurre anche gli altri due in prosa toscana, apparentemente più antichi del precedente: la *Storia di Apollonio re di Tiro* e il *Leggere d'Apollonio di Tiri*; probabilmente è quest'ultimo, o un suo stadio antecedente, che Antonio Pucci (1310–80) mise in versi nei suoi *Cantari*.¹⁵ Uno sguardo al testo dei volgarizzamenti più antichi in cui l'episodio è conservato non consente di rinvenire elementi tali da far supporre che Dante avesse accesso a una versione in volgare piuttosto che in latino. Nel *Libro d'Apollonio* si legge (12.1 s. ed. Sacchi):

ed egli s'apiccò a un'asse della nave e ivi suso canpò, sicché il mare lo gittò a uno lido, ignudo; e questo lido era presso a Pentrapoli [sic] a due miglia. E stando Apollonio così arivato come v'ho detto, sì cominciò a fare grande lamento, e dice: "O mare crudelissimo e reo, che non m'hai voluto ricevere né farmi morire . . ."

and he grabbed on to a plank of the ship and survived on it until the sea tossed him, naked, on shore; and this shore was two miles from Pentrapolis. And having arrived just as I have recounted, Apollonius began to lament loudly, saying: "O cruelest and iniquitous sea, who has wanted neither to welcome me nor to cause my death . . ."

Comunque interessante, anche se lacunoso, il *Leggere d'Apollonio di Tiri*, il cui estensore ha arricchito la descrizione e enfatizzato lo sbalordimento di Apollonio nei confronti del mare (12.1–3 ed. Sacchi):

e no ne iscanpò se non solamente Apolonio, e canpò sun una ase de la nave [. . .]. E per ventura il mare il gitò a la riva preso a la città di Pietra Politana [. . .]; ed andando su per la riva del mare e la tenpesta si rimase in grande bonacia e 'n grande tranquillade, ed aparvero in cielo le stelle, e di poco ispazio si fece di chiaro e belo. E quando Apolonio andavasi per la riva del mare contro a la ventura sua, e vegendo in così poco il mare venuto in cotanta bonacia, ed egli era in poco tempo così pericolato ***.

And Apollonius alone escaped, and survived on a plank of the ship. . . . And by chance the sea cast him on shore near the city of Pietra Politana . . . ; and walking along the seashore the sea remained calm and serene, and the stars appeared in the sky, and shortly thereafter the weather became clear and lovely. And when Apollonio was walking along the seashore facing his destiny, and seeing the sea turn so calm in such a short time, and shortly before he had been in great danger ***.

Tutti questi indizi fanno pensare che, quando Dante scriveva, almeno una redazione della *Historia Apollonii* fosse già diffusa a Firenze e non è difficile credere che fosse nota anche a Dante, il quale, nel rappresentare l'uomo che contempla l'abisso del male a cui si è sottratto, potrebbe essersi ispirato proprio al naufragio di Apollonio.

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NOTE

1. Riporto il testo dall'edizione di Giorgio Petrocchi, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata* (Milano: Mondadori, 1966–67). I commentatori non si stancano di precisare che “con lena affannata” è da riferirsi a “si volge . . . e guata”, e non a “uscito fuor del pelago”, poiché “lena” vale “respiro” (cf. *Inf.* 24.43; *Purg.* 4.116).

2. Le traduzioni in inglese sia dall'italiano sia dal latino sono di Richard Lansing.

3. Cf., su questa linea, Francesco Mazzoni, *Saggio di un nuovo commento alla “Divina Commedia”. Inferno. Canti I-III* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1967), 75–79.

4. Robert Hollander, *Allegory in Dante's “Commedia”* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 84–86. In precedenza l'unico vago confronto era stato istituito con il noto *incipit* del II libro di Lucrezio, che Dante non conosceva e che con questa similitudine ha poco a che fare. Raffronti di minor rilevanza sono raccolti da Luigi Venturi, *Le similitudini dantesche* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1911), 186 s.

5. I principali romanzi pervenutici sono, sul versante greco, quelli di Caritone, Senofonte Efesio, Longo, Achille Tazio, Eliodoro; sul versante latino quello, frammentario, di Petronio, le *Metamorfosi* di Apuleio e l'anonima *Historia Apollonii*. Per una panoramica globale sul romanzo antico basta qui rinviare a Gareth Schmeling (ed.), *The Novel in the Ancient World*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003²), con ampia bibliografia.

6. Per i numerosi raffronti e la storia del tema cf. Giulio Vannini, *Petronii Arbitri “Satyricon” 100–115. Edizione critica e commento* (Berlin – New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 16–18 e 274–6, con ulteriore bibliografia.

7. Testo secondo *Storia di Apollonio re di Tiro*, a cura di Giulio Vannini (Milano: Mondadori, in corso di stampa). Una redazione di poco più antica, la cosiddetta “redazione A”, contrariamente al solito, è in questo caso più rapida (“Apollonius vero unius tabulae beneficio in Pentapolitarum est litore pulsus. [iterum] Stans Apollonius in litore nudus, intuens tranquillum mare ait: ‘O Neptune, eqs.’”), priva com'è di due particolari, aggiunti dal redattore B o omessi per errore: il rigurgito dell'acqua bevuta dal naufrago e la precisazione *quod paulo ante turbidum senserat*, un dettaglio espressivo che esalta la pericolosa incostanza del mare. Con essa si accorda, grosso modo, la redazione di Stoccarda a cui accenneremo più avanti.

8. Fondamentale lo studio di Elimar Klebs, *Die Erzählung von Apollonius aus Tyrus. Eine geschichtliche Untersuchung über ihre lateinische Urform und ihre späteren Bearbeitungen* (Berlin: Reimer, 1899), 12–178, il primo a ripartire sistematicamente la tradizione manoscritta in redazioni; più aggiornati, anche se non sempre approdano a risultati condivisibili, i *Prolegomena* all'edizione di George A.A. Kortekaas, *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri* (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1984). Una buona sintesi dello *status quaestionis* è offerta da Giovanni Garbugino, *Enigmi della “Historia Apollonii regis Tyri”* (Bologna: Pàtron, 2004), 23–47, e si veda anche l'introduzione di Vannini, *Storia di Apollonio . . .*, con ulteriore bibliografia.

9. Sulla fortuna europea del romanzo si veda ancora Klebs, *Die Erzählung . . .*, 323–511, e soprattutto Elizabeth Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre. Medieval and Renaissance Themes and Variations* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1991), 45–62 e 182–216; qualcos'altro in George A.A. Kortekaas, “The Latin adaptations of the *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri* in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance”, *Groningen colloquia on the novel* 3 (1990): 103–22, e Stefano Pittaluga, “La fortuna di Apollonio”, *Studi umanistici piceni* 19 (1999): 165–75; panoramiche più sintetiche in Kortekaas, *Historia Apollonii . . .*, 5–9, Elizabeth Archibald, “Apollonius of Tyre in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance”, in: Heinz Hofmann (ed.), *Latin Fiction. The Latin Novel in Context* (London: Routledge, 1999), 193–200, e Garbugino, *Enigmi . . .*, 177–87. Negli ultimi anni l'indagine, che coinvolge autori e testi di tutta Europa, è stata notevolmente approfondita ed è in costante evoluzione: si vedano, fra i molti lavori, gli atti raccolti da Fabrizio Beggiato – Sabina Marinetti (edd.), *Vettori e percorsi tematici nel Mediterraneo* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2002), 145–309; Maria Grazia Capusso, “Sulla tradizione gallo-romanza dell'*Apollonio di Tiro*”, *Studi mediolatini e volgari* 47 (2001): 205–22; ead., “Tra Francia e

Catalogna: sondaggi testuali per *Apollonio di Tiro*”, *Critica del testo* 10 (2007): 69–114, con molta bibliografia recente alle pp. 110–14.

10. Sulla tradizione manoscritta rinvio a Kortekaas, *Historia Apollonii* . . . , 14–58 e 419–424, con note relative, che per i testimoni perduti segue sostanzialmente Max Manitius, *Handschriften antiker Autoren in mittelalterlichen Bibliothekskatalogen*, Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen, 67 (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1935), 324 s.; numerosi riferimenti all’opera sono elencati da Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre. Medieval* . . . , 217–33.

11. Cf. Enrico da Settimello, *Elegia*, a cura di Giovanni Cremaschi (Bergamo: Istituto Italiano Edizioni Atlas, 1949), 58: “Non semper Marium, nec semper sepe rotatum / volvis Apollonium”; e *L’intelligenza. Componimento anonimo del XIII secolo*, a cura di Marco Berisso (Milano: Fondazione Pietro Bembo – Guanda, 2000), 32: “ed èvi Tarsia e ’l prenze Antinagore / e d’Apollonio la lira sonante, / e Archistrate regina di valore, / cui sorprese esto Amore al gaio sembiente”. Questi e altri raffronti sono riportati da Luca Sacchi, *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri. Volgarizzamenti italiani* (Firenze: SISMELE, 2009), 3–6, da vedere per una storia della diffusione del testo in Italia.

12. Cf. Francesco Mazzoni, “Una presunta fonte del Boccaccio”, *Studi Danteschi* 29 (1950): 192–96, che individua nel rinvenimento della moglie di Apollonio (cap. 25) il modello di una storia affine raccontata da Messalino (*Filocolo* 4.67) che altri riconducono, meno persuasivamente, alle *Metamorfosi* di Apuleio (10.12) o al *Cligès* di Chrétien de Troyes (5854 ss.). Alcuni tratti dello stesso episodio ricompaiono anche in una novella del *Decameron* (10.4).

13. Indicata con la sigla RSt da Klebs, il primo a circoscriverne la tradizione e a studiarne la genesi (id., *Die Erzählung* . . . , 80–105 e 160–78; cf. anche Kortekaas, *Historia Apollonii* . . . , 18 s., 55 s., e 88–92), la redazione di Stoccarda è ad oggi inedita, ad eccezione di alcuni stralci inclusi in Klebs, *passim*, che a p. 163 riporta parte del brano che ci interessa (vedi sopra, n. 7). La sua diffusione in Italia è per lo più ricostruibile grazie all’ampia influenza che esercitò, mentre l’effettiva consistenza della produzione manoscritta è più difficile da sondare: di origine italiana sono almeno due testimoni parigini, provenienti dalla raccolta visconteo-sforzesca (Parisini lat. 7531 e 8502), e due vaticani (Urbinas lat. 456 e Vaticanus lat. 1961), appartenuti rispettivamente a Guidantonio da Montefeltro e a Jacopo Orsini (cf. Sacchi, *Historia Apollonii* . . . , 11 n. 25).

14. Tutti editi da Sacchi, *Historia Apollonii* . . . , che alle pp. 11–17 conferma la loro dipendenza dalla RSt a suo tempo stabilita da Klebs, *Die Erzählung* . . . , 423–41; in precedenza, i volgarizzamenti in toscano erano stati pubblicati da Leone Del Prete, *Storia d’Apollonio di Tiro. Romanzo greco, dal latino ridotto in volgare italiano nel secolo XIV* (Lucca: Tipografia Canovetti, 1861) e da William Robins, “A Fifteenth-Century *Apollonio di Tiro*”, *Letteratura italiana antica* 5 (2004): 11–26.

15. Cf. Klebs, *Die Erzählung* . . . , 441–50; Tina Mazzanti, “La fonte dei *Cantari di Apollonio di Tiro* di Antonio Pucci”, *Convivium*, n.s., 4 (1957): 315–26; più scettico Sacchi, *Historia Apollonii* . . . , 29–33, a cui si deve l’ipotesi che Pucci si rifacesse a uno stadio più antico del volgarizzamento.

Toward the Innocence of a Child? The Cluster of Child Similes in *Paradiso*

THOMAS E. MUSSIO

Beginning in Canto 19 and running to the end of *Paradiso* a series of images comparing the pilgrim to an infant or young animal appears (*Par.* 19.91–96; *Par.* 22.1–9; *Par.* 23.1–12; *Par.* 30.82–87; and *Par.* 33.106–108). This cluster of images signals an important development in the way the pilgrim is portrayed as the poem nears its conclusion. Although the pilgrim's figuration as a child first occurs in *Inferno* and is evoked occasionally throughout the rest of the *Commedia*, the theme is most pronounced in the last cantos of *Paradiso*. The five comparisons of the pilgrim to a child or nestling stand out against other similar comparisons and similes spread over the previous canticles, with only one in *Inferno* (23.37–42) and three in *Purgatorio* (27.44–45, 30.43–44, and 31.64–66). Still more important than the increase in frequency is the shift in the primary point of the similes. While the earlier comparisons focus on the pilgrim's fear and the comfort Virgil provides him,¹ the mother-child similes in *Paradiso* strengthen the bond by focusing on the instinctual and loving relationship between a being and its progenitor. This theme is first exemplified in the two passages that focus on the nestling's bond with the mother bird (*Par.* 19.91; *Par.* 23.1) and reaches its climax in the last two comparisons which imagine the pilgrim/poet as an infant at his mother's breast (*Par.* 30.82; *Par.* 33.106). Together with the comparison that opens *Paradiso* 22 and other significant passages focusing on infancy and childhood in the last third of the poem, these images serve to illuminate Dante's acknowledgment of the contradictory aspects of childhood, the state of the pilgrim's soul as he moves toward God, and the interrelation of the will and the intellect in a soul's state of beatitude.

The first simile of the cluster, in *Paradiso* 19, shows how “small” the pilgrim has become in relation to his experience. It comes just after one of the pilgrim’s longest-held doubts has been answered regarding the justice of denying salvation to virtuous pagans, one that has been voiced repeatedly through the words and character of Virgil (*Inf.* 4.31–42; *Purg.* 3.34–45; *Purg.* 7.22–39; *Purg.* 21.16–18). The souls in the sphere of Jupiter have chastened the pilgrim for questioning the justice of “[l]a prima volontà” of God “ch’è da sé buona” (*Par.* 19.86) for taking a short-sighted view (“con la veduta corta d’una spanna”)(*Par.* 19.81).² They tell him, in brief, that divine providence lies beyond his understanding and that to pretend otherwise would be to flatter the “menti grosse” (*Par.* 19.85) of humankind. Their response functions as a conclusion to the whole question of the apparent injustice of the exclusion of the virtuous unbaptized. Commentators have seen the simile that describes the moment after the souls’ forceful response and the pilgrim’s admiring gaze upward as signaling primarily the pilgrim’s satisfaction with it, or a commixture of his satisfaction and gratitude.³ It likens the pilgrim to the “pasciuti . . . figli” of the mother stork that circles above them:

Quale sovresso il nido si rigira
poi c’ha pasciuti la cicogna i figli,
e come quel ch’è pasto la rimira;
cotal si fece, e sì levai i cigli
la benedetta imagine, che l’ali
movea sospinte da tanti consigli.
(*Par.* 19.91–96)

Yet the secondary effect of the simile’s diminishing the stature of the pilgrim’s intellect by comparing him to nestlings is felt forcefully when the souls repeat their criticism of his limitations: “Quali / son le mie note a te, che non le intendi, / tal è il giudicio eterno a voi mortali” (*Par.* 19.97–99). The souls underline the fact that the pilgrim has still not understood their words (“che non le intendi”), and hence, if the pilgrim can be said to be satisfied by their message, it is likely that the satisfaction derives from the acknowledgment of his not understanding, of his smallness in relation to the blessed souls and ultimately to God.

Besides marking a high point if not the culmination of the major question in the poem on the problem of pagan salvation, the interaction between the souls of Jupiter and the pilgrim and their figurations as

mother and child, respectively, is significant in that it articulates in a condensed way the manner in which the pilgrim's relation to his various spiritual teachers has forced him to reconsider his thinking throughout the previous cantos of *Paradiso*.⁴ From the start of this *cantica* the pilgrim is *learning to unlearn* and recognizing how human reason can distort reality. Beatrice disabuses him of the erroneous "oppinion . . . de' mortali / dove chiave di senso non diserra" (*Par.* 2.52–54) regarding the origin of the moon's spots and later warns him not to take vows lightly, as humans often do (*Par.* 5.73–75); Piccarda teaches him not to impose his worldly, competitive view of human relations on the relation of the blessed to God (*Par.* 3.64–87); and Thomas cautions him about the human tendency toward making hasty and faulty judgments (*Par.* 13.112–120). It is clear that besides learning about Christian doctrine—one recalls Beatrice's discussion of the absoluteness of a vow (*Par.* 5.19–63), the necessity of Christ's death (*Par.* 7.117–120), and Solomon's explanation of the resurrection of the body (*Par.* 14.37–60)—the pilgrim has been gaining insight into how not to think, that is, how presumption can lead one astray. This process of unlearning forces the pilgrim to reexamine how his assumptions and habitual ways of thinking may be responsible for his straying from the virtuous life. In this way the image of the child provides Dante with an endpoint at which such adult illusions must be shed. By *Paradiso* 19 and the occurrence of this simile Dante has already portrayed a steadily evolving pilgrim, yet here the process becomes more explicit and suggestive of the poet's purposeful use of the concept of childhood as a measure of the pilgrim's growth.

The second simile of the group begins *Paradiso* 22, and like the one in *Paradiso* 19, it focuses on the greatness of the pilgrim's experience in relation to his capacity to understand it fully. Once again it describes the reaction of the pilgrim to a strong statement by the saved souls, this time by the contemplatives in the sphere of Saturn, who end *Paradiso* 21 with their thunderous condemnation ("grido") of the waywardness of Church leaders. They overwhelm the pilgrim not with their words, which he in any case is unable to understand, but with the power of their united voices. And once again the pilgrim is reduced to the helplessness of a child.

Oppresso di stupore, a la mia guida
mi volsi, come parvol che ricorre
sempre colà dove più si confida;

e quella, come madre che soccorre
subito al figlio palido e anelo
con la sua voce, che 'l suol ben disporre . . .
(*Par.* 22.1–6)

Critics and commentators are reticent about linking this simile to the nestling simile of *Paradiso* 19. Indeed, none of the commentators makes the connection, while several (Tommaseo, Poletto, and Torraca) recall the similar figuration of the fearful pilgrim in relation to the comforting Virgil in the late cantos of *Purgatorio*.⁵ This lack of critical attention may derive from the sense that there is a basic difference in the vehicles of the two similes. After all, one features a nestling and the other compares the pilgrim to a child; one conjures up an image of nature, the other a domestic scene.⁶ Moreover, the primary points of the similes have been seen as different, the stork/nestlings simile portraying the satisfaction and gratitude of the pilgrim, the mother/child comparison of *Paradiso* 22 his instinctual fear and Beatrice's comforting presence. Admittedly, the second simile has greater emotional power than the first, in which the pilgrim's long-held doubt concerning pagan salvation is put at bay. Nevertheless, besides portraying the pilgrim's dependence and helplessness, Dante intimates here as well that the pilgrim's fear derives as much from his confused intellect as from an instinctual response to the "tuono" he hears.

In citing Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* as a source for the opening of the simile in *Paradiso* 22 ("oppresso di stupore"), several commentators (Tommaseo, Hollander, and Chiavacci Leonardi) perceive a link to the stork/nestling simile of *Paradiso* 19 in that one finds in each the idea that spiritual growth comes through one's liberation from a conditioned view of the world. Because the "grido" remains incomprehensible to the pilgrim, the reference to his being "oppresso di stupore" (*Par.* 22.1) underlines his vulnerability, suggesting that he is still too attached to the ways of this world. While Tommaseo and Hollander are content to point out the verbal echoing of Boethius' text, Chiavacci Leonardi pursues the implications of such a borrowing and clearly identifies the participle "oppresso" as indicating an emotional condition deriving from a fear of something that surpasses his capability to comprehend it.⁷ Her interpretation draws a parallel between the state of the pilgrim here and the intellectual stupor of Boethius' protagonist, for the passage from the *Consolation*

of *Philosophy* portrays Lady Philosophy describing the protagonist's unresponsiveness to her calling out to him, which she attributes not to a sense of shame on his part but to his lethargy, delusion, and loss of self. She then begins her care of her disciple by wiping the clouds of the things of this world from his eyes with her robe.⁸ Chiavacci Leonardi suggests that even at this late stage of his journey the pilgrim is susceptible to intellectual error and disorientation, his view of paradise continuing to be conditioned by a view that remains too secular in nature. Beatrice confirms his inadequacy: "Non sai tu che tu se' in cielo / e non sai tu che 'l cielo è tutto santo?" (*Par.* 22.7). This gentle reminder recalls Beatrice's similar observations when the pilgrim failed initially to understand that he was ascending through the heavens (*Par.* 1.88–91) or that the souls of heaven were appearing to him in other than the form and hue of their earthly bodies (*Par.* 3.29). Hence, the childlike action of the pilgrim confirms his affectionate relation to Beatrice but also intimates the kind of dependence and intellectual immaturity that he must leave behind.

The parallels of the mother/child simile in *Paradiso* 22 to *Purgatorio* 27 and *Purgatorio* 30 support the idea that Dante is attempting to synthesize opposing views of childhood and the relationship between childhood and one's proper relation to God at climactic points in the last two canticles. In *Purgatorio* 27 Virgil cajoles the reluctant pilgrim to cross through the wall of purgative fire by reminding him that Beatrice lies beyond that wall, smiling at him, "come al fanciul si fa ch'è vinto al pome" (*Purg.* 27.45). The single-mindedness of the pilgrim's childlike desire here has perplexed commentators who find such a portrait of the pilgrim inappropriate at a moment of high seriousness in the poem since the child image has negative connotations of immaturity and dependence.⁹ One could argue that Dante recuperates the seriousness of the scene later in the canto when Virgil promises that the pilgrim will taste "quel dolce pome" (*Purg.* 27.115) of the earthly paradise, thereby casting the pilgrim's previous yearning for Beatrice in terms of his imminent return to an innocent, Edenic state. Indeed, countering the negative sense of the child's frivolous desire is the arc of the pilgrim's larger journey of the *Paradiso*, as well as the *Commedia* as a whole, where adult humankind is continually exposed as limited, presumptuous, and easily deceived. One need only consider Matelda's gentle correction of the pilgrim when he mistakes her for an enamored maiden: "Voi siete nuovi, e forse perch'io rido . . . tienvi alcun

sospetto; / ma luce rende il salmo *Delectasti*" (*Purg.* 28.76–80). His intellectual error occurs after he has been crowned and mitered over his own will by Virgil, and this misconception in the terrestrial paradise suggests what the whole of the *Paradiso* will bear out, namely that conversion involves a continual dialectic of the will and the intellect which extends even to the blessed. Hence, if a child's desire is flawed, Dante seems to pose the question: what man is spiritually mature?

A similar tension between the two views of childhood pervades the passage in *Purgatorio* 30. The simile here compares the pilgrim rushing in fear and excitement to confide in Virgil, just after having glimpsed Beatrice, to a "fantolin" who runs "a la mamma / quando ha paura o quando elli è afflitto" (*Purg.* 30.44–45). On one level the simile mirrors that of *Paradiso* 22, which, as Scartazzini points out, focuses on a child's lack of reason, the instinctual reaction of the pilgrim, and the temporary abandonment of his intellectual faculties.¹⁰ Yet the pilgrim's helpless gesture toward Virgil is countered by Dante's purposeful evocation of his strong recollection of his first seeing Beatrice as a child that immediately precedes the simile: "Tosto che ne la vista mi percosse / l'alta virtù che già m'avea trafitto / prima ch'io fuor di *puerizia* fosse . . ." (*Purg.* 30.40–42, emphasis mine). Dante ironically juxtaposes this life-altering childhood vision of Beatrice with the pilgrim's desperate anxiety at seeing her now. Two images of childhood compete here: one a moment of weakness portraying the need for direction and comfort, the other a moment of strength when his innocence allows him to feel the full force of Beatrice's "alta virtù." In situating the first, strong effects of the vision in a time before he was "fuor di *puerizia*," Dante emphasizes the force of his childhood imagination and its unique sensibility. Yet the opposing image of the helpless child in the simile demonstrates that Dante does not have a completely idealized view of childhood.

The tension between intellectual and spiritual maturity that permeates the images of childhood and manhood is at the base of the pilgrim's return to Beatrice in the earthly paradise and, indeed, of her chastisement of him, as well. It is clear that the meeting with Beatrice in *Purgatorio* is more than a return to her as she was as a child, for now she is the grown woman of the *Vita Nuova* after the first greeting between them, though endowed with a quality of that first vision.¹¹ Besides her high spiritual significance in the *Paradiso*, she is the woman of the *Vita Nuova* who has elicited conflicting sentiments in the poet. As his relationship with her grows, it

is marked by an uncertainty and complexity that is inconsistent with childlike innocence. Yet Dante notes the presence even in his childhood of the seeds of his waywardness. Indeed, Dante's portrait of himself as a child in the *Vita Nuova* attests to both the positive and negative connotations of childhood. If childhood is the moment when he is convinced that his beatitude lies in Beatrice ("Apparuit iam vestra beatitudo"), it is also the time when he feels the force of his human carnality, for already his "spirito naturale" complains of this love ("Heu miser, quia frequenter impeditus ero deinceps") (*Vita Nuova*, 2.6).¹² The division in his soul provoked by that first vision in childhood puts into question any simple notion of the innocence and virtue of childhood. When Beatrice chastises the pilgrim in *Purgatorio* 30–31 that as a grown man he should not have been deceived by the false pleasures of the world, as some children are, Dante portrays childhood as a particularly vulnerable time when such deviations are natural and unrestrained by a child's undeveloped intellect, contrasting it with the spiritual maturity of a man. Beatrice uses the image of the young bird: "Novo augelletto due o tre aspetta; / ma dinanzi da li occhi d'i pennuti / rete si spiega indarno o si saetta" (*Purg.* 31.61–63), to compel the pilgrim to now lift his "beard" and look at her. She rebukes him sharply for his transgression, whether his error is understood as sensual or philosophical in nature.¹³ His developed intellect should have served to draw him closer to beatitude, but he followed the general tendency of humankind to turn away from uprightness despite having acquired a developed and independent intellect, a state of fallenness that Beatrice will later criticize in her speech in *Paradiso* 27. Hence, Beatrice is not referring the pilgrim back to that childhood state in which the soul is vulnerable and error more excusable but urging him forward toward attaining the spiritual maturity appropriate to his age.

The dichotomy between the pilgrim as child and man that comes into view with Beatrice's comment on his beard plays out over the rest of the poem, for in some ways the pilgrim is becoming both a child and an adult. Though the similes in *Paradiso* suggest that the pilgrim remains or is becoming a child in relation to Beatrice, they also show him developing into her peer. In Cantos 3 and 4 of *Paradiso*, both Piccarda and Beatrice address the pilgrim as "frate" (*Par.* 3.70; *Par.* 4.100; *Par.* 22.61), conferring on him a certain equality of status. This status is earned, of course, by his entrance into the realm of the saved where all souls share in the movement toward their realization of this love despite being endowed with

different capacities for love. The transition from the guidance of Virgil to that of Beatrice also reflects this growth, especially at points in which Virgil anticipates that Beatrice will be able to explain a concept better than he, as when he speaks of free will: “La nobile virtù Beatrice intende / per lo libero arbitrio, e però guarda / che l’abbi a mente, s’a parlar ten prende” (*Purg.* 18.73–75).¹⁴ As the pilgrim moves forward and upward on his journey and becomes more adult in his understanding, he requires a higher and more insightful guide. Indeed, by the time he reaches the earthly paradise Virgil has nothing more to impart to him. The pilgrim’s spiritual and intellectual growth is likewise further marked toward the end of the *Paradiso*, when, in his final address to Beatrice (*Par.* 31.79–93), he uses the form “tu,” thereby implying a status of equality with her. At the same time, the backward trajectory of the journey is evident from the start of the poem: the pilgrim is deflected from his forward progress toward the mountain in *Inferno* 1 and turned toward Hell; his climb up Mount Purgatory is accompanied by the removal of the P’s upon his forehead, signaling his gradual divestment of the slough of sin. And this process continues in the *Paradiso*, as the pilgrim moves backward through his birth constellation toward the source of his creation.

Dante’s use of the image of the child to depict the pilgrim’s immature view of paradise suggests the double significance of “childhood” in the pilgrim’s journey in *Paradiso*: he must become more mature as more is revealed to him, and leave behind his previous more limited view of heaven and earth; at the same time, his ceding control to forces patently greater than those he possesses stresses his childlike nature. When Dante first sounds the “child” motif in the canticle, as Beatrice sighs patiently and turns indulgently to the pilgrim “con quel sembiante / che madre fa sovra figlio deliro” (*Par.* 1.101–2) to explain to him that he is rising toward heaven, the poet emphasizes the pilgrim’s disorientation and his lack of preparation for understanding the new world he is entering. While the primary point of the comparison is to express Beatrice’s patience and tolerance, commentators agree that the image of a “delirious child” underscores the ignorance or intellectual limitations of the pilgrim.¹⁵ Still, while emphasizing the significance of “deliro,” they leave unexplored the purpose behind the poet’s choice of the image of a child. Yet when Beatrice continues in this vein two cantos later, smiling at the pilgrim’s “pueril coto” (*Par.* 3.26) for his not perceiving the souls of the moon as they are, the reader suspects that Dante wishes to put into strong relief

the intellectual immaturity of the pilgrim. A long line of commentators follows Francesco da Buti's interpretation of the phrase as indicative of the pilgrim's habit of viewing the world through his senses alone.¹⁶ These two instances point to the pilgrim's disorientation at finding himself in a world so at odds with his preconceptions of it. They are consistent with the negative view of the child that Dante, citing Ecclesiastes 10:16–17, provides in the *Convivio*, as an example of a mind that is insufficient to govern: "Guai a te, terra, lo cui re è fanciullo, e li cui principi la domane mangiano" (*Conv.* 4.6.19).¹⁷ The explicit figuration of the pilgrim's childlike limitations reaches a high point in *Paradiso* 7 when Beatrice realizes that the pilgrim does not understand that Christ's willingness to die on the cross constitutes a "giusta vendetta" (*Par.* 7.50) for the redemption of the sins of humanity and attributes his incomprehension to the immaturity of his mind: he is, she says, like one "il cui ingegno / ne la fiamma d'amor non è adulto" (*Par.* 7.59–60). Unlike previous references to the pilgrim's childlike way of thinking, this one highlights an additional aspect of his immaturity. The fact that his intellect ("ingegno") has not matured ("adulto") within the flame of love ("ne la fiamma d'amor") means not only that this theological question cannot be approached coldly as a purely intellectual question but also that an essential part of the pilgrim's maturity during his voyage will be to grow in charity and gratitude.¹⁸ Equally important, the passage demonstrates the interconnectedness of desire and intellect in Dante's view.

The extended simile that opens *Paradiso* 23 builds upon the sense of the pilgrim's innocence, helplessness, and need expressed in the similes of *Paradiso* 19 and *Paradiso* 22. In this simile Beatrice is compared to an "augello" in the nest with her "dolci nati" waiting for the night to pass so that she can see her young and find food for them, a task she cherishes as she gazes in expectation toward the east where the sun will rise (*Par.* 23.1–15). In the context of the poem Beatrice is presently awaiting the arrival of Christ, Mary, and all the blessed souls in a joyful remembrance of Christ's triumph over sin and death. While commentaries have tended to focus on either the emotional effect of this simile or its literary source in Statius, Virgil, or Lactantius, they have neglected to note how it recalls the nestling comparison of *Paradiso* 19 and the similar superior position of Beatrice in relation to the pilgrim and in the pilgrim's figuration as completely reliant on divine revelation.¹⁹ Momigliano, however, makes separate observations on the two images which implicitly link them, noting

how in the first the pilgrim's act of looking upward like a nestling at its mother puts into relief his smallness in relation to his saintly informers, and how likewise in *Paradiso* 23 the simile, in depicting the vastness of the space into which the mother bird gazes, portrays the pilgrim (as well as Beatrice) as small in relation to God.²⁰ In addition, the position of the comparison at the beginning of the canto also aligns it with the mother/child simile that opens *Paradiso* 22. Both feature the maternal relationship and the instinctual bond between the mother and her young. Both analogies stress the pilgrim's posture of desire, nearly devoid of intellectual pretense.

Yet the simile's position at the beginning of *Paradiso* 23 returns one to the double valence of the child image for Dante. The state of the pilgrim described by the simile directly follows two important backward glances in *Paradiso* 22: his reflection on his passage through the constellation under whose influence he was born (*Par.* 22.110–120) and his turning back to view how much of the universe he has traversed up to this point (*Par.* 22.128–154). The former evokes his regressive return to a more innocent state of being, the latter his more mature understanding of the smallness of the earth with respect to the cosmos. Hollander notes Singleton's citation of Grandgent's observation that despite Beatrice's declaration of the falseness of the idea that souls return to their birth star, the pilgrim in fact does make such a return here, even if it is only temporary. The image of return urges reflection on the pilgrim's earliest moments of life, "quand'io senti' di prima l'aere toscò" (*Par.* 22.117), and the feeling of nostalgia the passage evokes, as Chiavacci Leonardi has noted.²¹ Clearly the entrance into the fixed stars marks an important point of demarcation in the poem, for now the pilgrim finds himself in the highest regions of heaven, while the poet now shows signs of even greater strain in attempting to record his experience for the benefit of humanity.²² However, the commentators are reticent about the significance of the pilgrim's return to his native constellation, even though Dante emphasizes that it was predestined: "la vostra region mi fu sortita" (*Par.* 22.120). This return is highly suggestive of a rebirth, a renewal signifying transcendence of the material world. Indeed, the principle of the instinctual love of the soul for its origins in God emerges as a theme in the *Purgatorio* and finds its rearticulation in the *Paradiso* by Beatrice, who tells the pilgrim that all beings possessing "intelletto e amore" feel drawn upward toward the empyrean by God's "providenza" (*Par.* 1.120–126).²³ It is a natural

movement, now that he is “privo / d’impedimento” (*Par.* 1.139–140), his will having been purified through his experience in purgatory and the earthly paradise. The theme of rebirth as a return to God is further anticipated in Marco Lombardo’s discourse on the diminutive “anima semplicitta,” the newly born soul which is an embodiment of pure desire and an uncorrupted intellect. It knows nothing except that it wishes to return to God: “l’anima semplicitta che sa nulla / salvo che, mossa da lieto fattore, / volentier torna a ciò che la trastulla” (*Purg.* 16.88–90). Hence the mutual love and joy evident in the description of the “lieto” creator and willing return of the simple, childlike soul seems to anticipate the figuration of the pilgrim as a child as he nears his vision of God.

Accompanying this instinctual backward movement is the intellectual maturity gained in the pilgrim’s gesture immediately following this re-entrance into his native stars. Looking back at the path of his journey, the pilgrim notices the smallness and pettiness of this world, “l’aiuola che ci fa tanto feroci” (*Par.* 22.151). This new perspective on the world epitomizes the learning process in which the pilgrim is engaged in *Paradiso*, for just as he sees the earth as one small part of the universe where men remain blind to its ultimate order, so he comes to see his own intellect as small and limited as it makes its approach to God. Positioned after the pilgrim’s rebirth and the humbling view of earthly life and human activity, the simile fittingly characterizes the pilgrim as being like sweet newborn birds (“dolci nati”), contrasting him with the “feroci” he has left behind. The juxtaposition of the instinctual movement of the will back through his birth stars, as well as his intellect’s new perspective on the greatness of God and the creation strongly suggests that the will and intellect are functioning in tandem to strengthen the virtue associated with spiritual maturity.

The image of the child/nestling in *Paradiso* 19 and *Paradiso* 23 tied to hunger, thirst, and nourishment in general finds a parallel in *Paradiso* 30 when the poet compares the pilgrim’s alacrity at responding to Beatrice’s command to drink from the river of light to the movement of an infant (“fantolin”) desiring his mother’s milk (*Par.* 30.82–87). The poet continues to stress the pilgrim’s need for spiritual nourishment even while seeming to diminish his intellectual stature. In the immediate context Beatrice promises that his “alto desio” to have “notizia” about what he is seeing will only be satisfied if he drinks from the river of light “quest’acqua”

(*Par.* 30.70–74). Commentators have seen in this image a portrait of natural appetite and the vehemence of desire. Steiner treats this “alto desio” as an expression of “il naturale desiderio di sapere” common to all humans. Trucchi cites St. Peter’s letter (I, II, 2) in which he writes that once one sheds his vices one should desire the “pure spiritual milk as infants do, so that they may grow toward salvation” (“sicut modo gemitu infantes, lac concupientes”).²⁴ Poletto cites St. John of Chrysostom’s comparison of the ardent desire for God to a child’s desire for the breast: “Nonne videtis quanta prorumpititudine parvuli papillas capiunt, et quanto impetus labia uberibus infigunt?”²⁵ This love is what will be needed for the final vision of God. At the same time Scartazzini and Vandelli, and Trucchi as well, call attention to Dante’s humility, suggesting that the pilgrim is not simply reduced to a state of unconsciousness, but rather has actively lowered himself to the state that would allow him to experience God.²⁶ Chiavacci Leonardi pursues this idea, paraphrasing Jesus’ words in Matthew 18:3: “solo al fiducioso abbandono dell’infanzia si apre il regno dei cieli.”²⁷ The varying emphases that the commentators place on the relationship between childhood and humility or a state of pure desire intimate the complexity of the child images in the later stages of *Paradiso*. Is a child meant to connote an unthinking being, instinctually loving what he or she does not understand intellectually, or rather the thinking individual who comes to understand the limits of his or her intellect?²⁸

Beatrice’s vehement condemnation of human cupidity in *Paradiso* 27 derives from the seminal passage from Matthew in which Christ urges that unless one changes and becomes like a little child, one cannot enter into heaven. Dante’s positioning of this speech within the cluster of child images points to his efforts to address the implications of Christ’s words, especially as they relate to the intellect’s relation to love. In this passage Beatrice declares that “fede e innocenza son reperte / solo ne’ parvoletti; poi ciascuna / pria fugge che le guance sian coperte” (127–29). She blames the continual temptations of the world for the corruption of the will, for although the will (“volere”), she says, flowers well (“ben fiorisce”) in the soul, the “pioggia continua” of the world turns the good fruit (“sosine vere”) into rotten plums (“bozzacchioni”). As she continues, she also implicates human reason: as long as one stammers in childhood, one is loving and obedient toward one’s mother, but with the arrival of one’s full capacity to speak (“con loquela intera”), love turns to

hatred and the individual “disia poi di vederla sepolta” (*Par.* 27.124–35). What is most striking about this passage is the clear division between childhood as a state of “faith and innocence” and the period of corruption that ensues, accompanied by the growth of one’s beard and the full acquisition of language which implies the independent use of one’s intellect.²⁹ Yet the weakness pertaining to childhood is also suggested here, for the child believes what he is told, his virtue depending on the goodness of his guides.³⁰ Moreover, childhood is viewed as a transient stage of life, inevitably passing into later periods that threaten the loss of virtue. Beatrice points out ironically that as one grows and becomes intellectually independent, one tends to dismiss the spiritual guides even though they are still needed. One overestimates the powers of one’s intellect. Yet ironically one can only recapture the lost innocence and faith of a child through the exercise of the intellect by recognizing how it must depend on faith and revelation, not on the sophistic treatment of scripture.³¹

A series of events that hint strongly at the pilgrim’s initiation to a higher spiritual plane prepares the scene for Beatrice’s speech on human cupidity in *Paradiso*. This occurs shortly after the pilgrim looks back once again at his journey’s path through the heavens (*Par.* 27.77–78) and his ascension into the ninth sphere of the *primo mobile* (*Par.* 27.97–99). Again Dante refers to the earth in deprecatory terms as “questa aiuola” (*Par.* 27.86). Since the previous child simile of *Paradiso* 23, the pilgrim has been interrogated on faith, hope, and charity by Peter, James, and John, respectively.³² The pilgrim’s encounter with John epitomizes the process of the correction of his misperceptions characteristic of *Paradiso*. While many commentators of this scene fail to perceive the symbolic significance of the pilgrim’s loss of sight and its restoration by Beatrice, Sapegno notes that the pilgrim’s desire to see John and his consequent blindness derives from his belief in the widespread idea that John was assumed into heaven with his body before the resurrection at the last judgment. Dante’s rejection of this notion is clear in John’s words to pilgrim: “Perché t’abbagli / per veder cosa che qui non ha loco? / In terra è terra ’l mio corpo” (*Par.* 25.122–124). Hence, the pilgrim’s childlike impulse to see John demonstrates the negative quality of the misled intellect in need of correction.³³

In the encounter with Peter in particular Dante’s language is tinged with reminiscences of Christian sacramental rituals and childhood. After Peter circles the pilgrim three times as he blesses him (*Par.* 24.150–53), the poet begins *Paradiso* 25 with a mixture of nostalgia for Florence and

the recognition that any glory that he might attain through his poetry will be due to this “second baptism,” which seems to have reinforced the one of his youth in Florence. Imagining his coronation as poet in his native city, Dante writes:

con altra voce omai, con altro vello
ritornerò poeta, e in sul fonte
del mio battesimo prenderò 'l cappello;
però che ne la fede, che fa conte
l'anime a Dio, quivi intra' io, e poi
Pietro per lei sì mi girò la fronte.

(*Par.* 25.7–12)

The poet's insistence upon receiving this honor at the very site of his baptismal font also suggests that his experience with Peter is in some way a reenactment of the rites of baptism. Indeed, the declaration of faith in the preceding canto is reminiscent of these sacraments of childhood, and the episode clearly marks a renewal of the pilgrim's faith and in a sense a return to the innocence of a child. Peter's praise of the simplicity of the pilgrim's responses stresses the opposition of childlike faith and over-intellectual accounts of doctrine: “Se quantunque s'acquista / giù per dottrina, fosse così 'nteso, / non li avria loco ingegno di sofista” (*Par.* 24.79–81). At the same time as he stresses the difference between sophisticated “demonstrations” and the simple faith of a child, the pilgrim affirms that it is through his mature judgment concerning the veracity of Scripture that he has arrived at this point of faith “che 'nverso d'ella / ogni dimostrazion mi pare ottusa” (*Par.* 24.95–96).

While Hollander comments that the child simile of *Paradiso* 30 is “the opening gesture in staging his identity as newborn ‘babe,’” which reaches its climax at the last of the similes that constitute the cluster of child/mother similes in *Paradiso* 33.106–8, the infant imagery to which he refers actually begins much earlier.³⁴ Indeed, the final image of the infant brings together the themes of dependence, inarticulateness, and desire expressed in the previous four comparisons, beginning with the one in *Paradiso* 19. Still, this dominant theme of childhood continues to intensify toward the end of the poem. Dante treats the theme of children through a large section of *Paradiso* 32 in Bernard's speech on the differing degrees of beatitude of baptized children.³⁵ Bernard's discourse corrects the surprised pilgrim's mistaken understanding of providential order, thus continuing

the pilgrim's education. These children, who died "prima ch'avesser vere elezioni" (32.45) and who are portrayed with "volti" and "voci puerili" (*Par.* 32.46–7), are ranked in heaven according their capacity for love: "intra sé qui più e meno eccellente" (*Par.* 32.60). They are placed not according to their actions but their "primiero acume" (*Par.* 32.75). Commentators like Bosco and Reggio have noted Dante's departure from Aquinas' and others' expectation that the saved souls be understood as existing at their most perfect, adult age. Beside satisfying the poetic need for variety pointed to by these commentators, this representation is certainly not inconsistent with Dante's portrayal of the pilgrim's movement backward toward a childlike state.³⁶ At the same time, their different levels of beatitude reveals Dante's view that the child is the seed of the man he will become and that both childish and adult souls alike are equally involved in unceasing growth in love for God.

As the pilgrim encounters his final vision, he recognizes that the sublimity of his experience overwhelms his ability to represent it in human language:

Omai sarà più corta mia favella,
pur a quel ch'io ricordo, che d'un fante
che bagni ancor la lingua a la mammella.
(*Par.* 33.106–8)

As this comparison primarily appeals to the inexpressibility *topos* that recurs throughout the *Paradiso*, it is interesting to note that now not only the pilgrim, but also the poet is reduced to the inarticulateness of a child at his mother's breast. Far from the eloquence of an elevated language, Dante pretends that his verses cannot match even the natural language of an infant. Yet the poet's sense of inadequacy is merely an extension of that of the pilgrim, whose intellect is equally confounded by the vision: "O luce eterna che sola in te sidi, / sola t'intendi, e da te intelletta / e intendente te ami e arridi" (*Par.* 19.124–26). The pilgrim too has been reduced to a state of pure desire, yet it is an inadequacy that paradoxically empowers him.

The pilgrim in the last stage of his experience in paradise is illuminated by the portrayal of the heavenly souls likewise as children. While they are often described as mature soldiers of Christ's "milizia," Dante explicitly figures them as infants rushing toward Mary: "fantolin che 'nver' la mamma / tende le braccia, poi che 'l latte prese, / per l'animo che 'nfin

di fuor s'infiamma" (*Par.* 23.121–22). They are like infants who, having drunk from their mother's breast, desire more. This state of ever-increasing and never sated desire defines the souls' joy in Dante's conception of paradise.³⁷ The image of the suckling infant provides an illustration of a natural, spontaneous bond between the souls and their spiritual mother. Just as Dante's comparison of the souls of the celestial rose to bees in *Paradiso* 31 recalls Virgil's description of the "prima voglia" of the soul to return to its source—"lo studio in ape / di far lo mele" (*Purg.* 18.58–9)—so here Dante wishes to emphasize the desire that pulls the blessed souls upward like flames to the sky. Yet this "childlike" state should not be construed as one of pure desire. Rather, it is a desire that is always evolving, conditioned by heaven's grace and the intellect.

The metaphoric diminution of the pilgrim as he moves toward God reflects the intellect's close relation to the will as it is defined in several places in the *Paradiso*, as in this passage describing the angels' relation to God:

E dei saper che tutti hanno diletto
quanto la sua veduta si profonda
nel vero in che si questa ogne intelletto.
Quinci si può veder come si fonda
l'esser beato ne l'atto che vede,
non in quel ch'ama, che poscia seconda;
e del vedere è misura mercede,
che grazia partorisce e buona voglia:
così di grado in grado si procede.
(*Par.* 28.106–14; my italics)

Hence, the natural, instinctual movement of the creature toward its creator is continually informed by an outpouring of grace. This grace allows the soul to know God and, subsequently, to love God. Then as Virgil had hinted to the pilgrim, grace runs to the loving soul "com'a lucido corpo raggio vene" (*Purg.* 15.68–69). In this way the soul spirals toward God in a sequence of increasing grace, understanding, and love. Intellection remains a vital part of this process: the soul is never reduced to a state of unthinking desire. In this sense the pilgrim continues to mature spiritually as he is led by his various guides to become a citizen of heaven, and the perpetual maturation of the intellect among the blessed parallels the pilgrim's continual refinement of his knowledge of God. For the pilgrim

this process of maturation largely involves the deliberate shedding of the pretensions and misconceptions that have accumulated throughout his adulthood. Thus the images of a child in the last cantos of the *Paradiso* signal the endpoint of the pilgrim's journey; but, more importantly, they also offer the promise of the continual actualization of the intellect and love that the blessed souls already enjoy.

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NOTES

1. Virgil's protectiveness in guiding the pilgrim past the beasts at the thresholds of each circle becomes particularly pronounced in Virgil's actions in front of the gate of Dis (*Inf.* 9.58–60) and upon Geryon's back (*Inf.* 17.82–84). This characteristic is strongly reaffirmed in the image of Virgil carrying the pilgrim to safety like a mother carrying a child (*Inf.* 23.37–43). For the evocation of the image of the adolescent Phaethon and its relation to the pilgrim, see Kevin Brownlee's "Phaethon's Fall and Dante's Ascent," *Dante Studies* 102 (1984): 135–44. Brownlee argues that Dante figures his pilgrim as a "corrected" Phaethon (in *Par.* 17.1–3 and *Par.* 31.124–26, as well as in the *Inferno* passage). Jerome Mazzaro discusses the emphasis on the protective quality of the mother-child relationship in the early similes of *Inferno* 23.38–41 and *Purgatorio* 30.44–45 in "Dante and the Image of the 'Madonna Allattante,'" *Dante Studies* 114 (1996): 102.

2. All citations are from Natalino Sapegno's edition of the *Commedia* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1955).

3. Gabriele (1525–41), Daniello (1547–68), and Mestica (1921–22) stress the satisfied curiosity of the pilgrim. Campi (1888–93), Poletto (1894), Steiner (1921), Casini and Barbi (1921), and Scartazzini and Vandelli (1929) speak of satisfaction combined with gratitude or love on the part of the pilgrim. A few commentators, like Carroll (1904), resist the idea that the pilgrim could have been satisfied with so general a response. David Gibbons, whose more recent reading of the passage, in "Alimentary Metaphors in Dante's *Paradiso*," *Modern Language Review* 93 (2001): 701, coincides with Carroll's, argues that the pilgrim's "digiuno" regarding the justice of God's damnation of the righteous pagans "will always remain unfulfilled." Unless otherwise noted, all references to the commentators are from the Dartmouth Dante Project (=DDP) at <http://dante.dartmouth.edu>.

4. The eagle declaims against human presumption but cannot be said to put to rest the question of the salvation of virtuous pagans. Mowbray Allan argues that in *Paradiso* 19 Dante imitates Aquinas' procedure in the *Summa Theologica* of producing arguments that are then countered with further ones introduced by the transitional Latin phrase, "sed contra." For Allan the question remains active throughout *Paradiso* 19 and *Paradiso* 20, pivoting at the tercet that begins at line 106 with the eagle's words "ma vedi." See his essay "Much Virtue in *Ma: Paradiso* XIX, 106, and St. Thomas's *Sed contra*," *Dante Studies* 111 (1993): 195–211.

5. Tommaseo (1837) observes that the simile evokes the images of the relationship between the pilgrim and Virgil in *Purgatorio* 27 and 28. Poletto (1894) notes that the pilgrim turns to Beatrice here much as he turned to the absent Virgil in *Purgatorio* 30.43–46, a view that Torraca (1905) shares.

6. Bosco and Reggio (1979) for instance rightly classify the simile opening *Paradiso* 22 with "comparationes domesticae." Iacopo della Lana (1324–28) explicitly distinguishes the human and animal in his comments on the simile introducing *Paradiso* 23, maintaining that the comparison of Beatrice to a watchful bird stresses the difference between human "libero arbitrio" from the instinct of animals. The Anonimo Fiorentino (~1400) follows Iacopo in this view.

7. Chiavacci Leonardi (1991–97): “*oppresso* . . . indica una compressione dell’animo dovuta ad arcano timore per qualcosa che supera le sue facoltà” (DDP).

8. *Consolation of Philosophy* (I, P2): “sed te, ut uideo, *stupor oppressit*” (but I see that you are overcome by shock). This passage in which Lady Philosophy first appears to the protagonist and speaks to him in many ways recalls the first accusatory words of Beatrice to the pilgrim in *Purgatorio* 30 and his inability to respond to her.

9. Mestica (1921–2) and Poletto (1854) note a “tono di amabile ironia” in Virgil’s words. Oelsner (1899) calls Virgil’s reaction “a kind of half pathetic amusement.” Several critics, including Fallani (1965), refer to the passage in *Convivio* 4.12.16 that treats the imperfection of the child’s mind: “piccoli beni le paiono grandi . . . Onde vedemo li parvuli desiderare massimamente un pomo.” Porena (1946–8) and Steiner (1921) hold opposing views, the former seeing no reason to be scandalized by Dante’s representation of the pilgrim as a child at this point and the latter struggling to defend Dante’s characterization here. Steiner feels compelled to remark that it is Dante who “deplora la propria puerile debolezza, nel serio e grave momento in cui ragione e volontà dovevano allearsi per l’ultima vittoria e non opporsi l’una all’altra.”

10. Scartazzini (1872–82 [2nd ed. 1900]), *Purg.* 30.43–44 (DDP).

11. The pilgrim sees Beatrice in clothes similar to those she wore in his first sight of her: “sotto verde manto / vestita di color di fiamma viva” (*Purg.* 30.32–3); “Apparve vestita di nobilissimo colore, umile e onesto, sanguigno” (*VN* 2.3). At his first sight of her, his “spirito de la vita . . . cominciò a tremare sì fortemente” (*VN* 2.4). Compare this with *Purg.* 30.34–36: “E lo spirito mio, che già cotanto / tempo era stato ch’a la sua presenza / non era di stupor, tremando, affranto.”

12. *Vita Nuova*, ed. Edoardo Sanguineti (Milan: Garzanti, 1977).

13. Most commentators believe that the word “pargoletta” (*Purg.* 31.59), to which Beatrice refers, denotes the sexual nature of the pilgrim’s transgression. Hollander holds that “Dante’s divagation also involved some sort of intellectual experiment that now seems without eventual value” (DDP, *Purg.* 30.58–60). For a discussion of the significance of philosophy in the *Commedia*, see Robert Hollander’s “Dante’s *Paradiso* as Philosophical Poetry,” *Italica* 86.4 (2009): 571–82.

14. See *Purg.* 15.76–78 for a similar moment.

15. Landino (1481), Vellutello (1544), Portirelli (1791–2), Bannassuti (1864–68), Campi (1888–93), Poletto (1894), Isidoro del Lungo (1926), Scartazzini and Vandelli (1929), Grabner (1934–6), Momigliano (1946–51), Porena (1946–8), Giacalone (1968), Bosco and Reggio (1979), and Hollander (2000–2007) all consider “deliro” as indicative of some intellectual defect.

16. Poletto (1894), Tozer (1901), Trucchi (1936), Mattalia (1960), Fallani (1965), and Bosco and Reggio (1975) endorse Buti’s idea.

17. *Convivio*, ed. Piero Cudini (Milan: Garzanti, 1980).

18. Mattalia (1960) comments that “un problema del genere non deve solo esser tema di fredde dissertazioni teologiche, ma va affrontato con l’alta e religiosa commozione che si addice al sublime argomento” (DDP, *Par.* 7.59). And Pietrobono (1946): “Chi non ama non intende le verità più grandi: la mente da sola, se non la impenni l’amore, non vede” (DDP, *Par.* 7.58).

19. Grabher (1934–36) notes the delicate emotion of affection in the adjectives “amate,” “dolci,” and “disiato.” Pietrobono (1946) stresses the tenderness of the portrait of Beatrice, something that endears her to the reader. Tommaseo (1837) and others note that the image of the expectant bird mentioned above has a precedent in Statius’ *Achilleid* (1.212–16), while others find sources in Virgil and Lactantius. Casini and Barbi cite Statius’ passage, Fallani and Porena, Lactantius’ poem, while Scartazzini sees both Statius’ passage and that of Virgil.

20. DDP, *Par.* 19.49–51; 23.1–9.

21. Chiavacci Leonardi writes that the poet’s memory of “l’aere toscano” in which he was born is the language of Dante “esule” (DDP, *Par.* 22.112–17).

22. The poet invokes his native constellation in the lines that follow to aid him as he encounters the “passo forte” (*Par.* 22.123) of narrating the final phases of the journey. Hollander notes that in this passage we find the last address to the reader in the poem, “as though the poet is underlining the distance between human and divine experience by leaving us behind.” For the division in the poem between *Paradiso* 22 and *Paradiso* 23, see C. P. Brand’s “Lectura Dantis: *Paradiso* XXIII,” in *Moving*

in *Measure: Essays in Honour of Brian Moloney*, ed. Judith Bryce and Doug Thompson (Hull: Hull University Press, 1989), 15–17.

23. Commenting on Marco's speech, Virgil distinguishes between the "prima voglia," which is like bees' instinct to make honey and the "libero abitrio," which is the source of virtue and the restraining force of this will (*Purg.* 18.46–75).

24. DDP, *Par.* 30.82–87.

25. Ibid.

26. DDP, *Par.* 30.82–84.

27. Ibid.

28. In his discussion of the evolution of the Church's image of the Virgin and Dante's figure of the infant nursing at his mother's breast (*Par.* 23.121–23; 30. 82–85; 33.106–8) through the intermediaries of St. Paul and St. Bernard, Mazzaro notes this tension in observing that such images of the child not only remind one of Christ's admonition that unless one becomes like a child one will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3), but also of the humility and hope that, like a Pauline "babe in Christ," one may be weaned by nurture like the Madonna's into the "solid food" of "spiritual man" (1 Corinthians 3:1–2) See Mazzaro, "Dante and the Image of the 'Madonna Allattante,'" 107).

29. Commentators see this as the division between childhood and adolescence, implying that adolescence is the beginning of the individual's submersion in the corrupting influences of the world. In the *Convivio* Dante had defined the four ages of a person's life as "adolescenza," gioventute," "senetute," and "senio" (*Conv.* 4.24–28). "Adolescenza" is understood broadly as the period leading to the perfection of "gioventute" at around 25 years of age when an intellectual guide, or "curatore," is no longer necessary. Dante's version of childhood in the *Paradiso* is more specifically defined, and one could reasonably see it as the first part of the "adolescenza" described in the earlier work.

30. Beatrice's criticism at the end of her speech about the world's lack of guides, "onde si svia l'umana famiglia" (*Par.* 27.141), strongly echoes Marco Lombardo's lament on the corruption of the "anima semplicità" caused by a lack of leadership in the church (*Purg.* 16.91–114). Michael Van der Wee, "Mother and Child in *Paradiso* 27," *Religion and Literature* 26.3 (1994): 1–17, explores the mother-child relationship evoked by Dante through Beatrice's speech in social, political, and linguistic terms. He also cites some suggestive parallels between Beatrice's lament of the corruption of man when he leaves childhood to Alan of Lille's critique of rebellious man in *The Plaint of Nature*.

31. For Beatrice's polemic against intellectually irresponsible preachers, see Carlo Delcorno, "Beatrice predicante (*Par.* XXIX, 85–126)," *L'Alighieri* 35 (2010): 111–31.

32. Umberto Limentani comments on the canto's transitional quality in "Lectura Dantis XXVII," in *Moving in Measure*, 31.

33. Epitomizing the more literal approach of several commentators regarding the significance of the pilgrim's blindness in *Paradiso* 25–26, Tozer (1901) remarks that "When the mind has been dazzled, as Dante's had been . . . by investigating too deeply a theological question, relief is to be found in the teaching of true theology, as represented by Beatrice." Giancarlo Rati, "Il Canto XXVI del *Paradiso*," *L'Alighieri* 32 (1991), affirms the usefulness of this non-allegorical reading: "il non vedere sembra alludere piuttosto alla difficoltà con cui il poeta si libera dai pregiudizi del mondo" (21).

34. Robert Hollander, "Babytalk in Dante's *Commedia*," in his *Studies in Dante* (Longo: Ravenna, 1980), 115–29.

35. For a discussion of Dante's position on infant baptism and its relation to views of Peter Lombard, Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Bernard of Clairvaux, see Steven Botterill, "Doctrine, Doubt and Certainty: *Paradiso* XXXII, 40–84," *Italian Studies* 42 (1987): 20–36. Botterill also discusses the question of the beatitude of baptized children who died before they could exercise fully their rational powers.

36. Bosco and Reggio believe that "Dante avrebbe potuto secondo Tommaso e, anche qui, secondo la maggioranza dei teologi, attribuire a tutti i beati una stessa età, quella 'perfetta', la gioventù, nella quale l'uomo ha raggiunto la sua perfezione e il declino non è ancora cominciato: era quella l'età in cui era morto Cristo, 33 anni" (DDP, *Par.* 32.40–75).

37. See Rossana Vanelli Coralli, "Le metafore del gusto e il paradosso percettivo della *contemplatio* mistica nel *Paradiso*," *L'Alighieri* 49 (2008): 23–41.

American Dante Bibliography for 2011

RICHARD LANSING

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The Dante Prize and the Charles Hall Grandgent Award

Since 1887 the Dante Society of America has offered an annual prize for the best student essay on a subject related to the life or works of Dante. The Dante Prize of five hundred dollars is offered for the best essay submitted by an undergraduate in any American or Canadian college or university, or by anyone not enrolled as a graduate student who has received the degree of A.B. or its equivalent within the past year. In addition, a prize of seven hundred and fifty dollars, the Charles Hall Grandgent Award, is offered for the best essay submitted by an American or Canadian student enrolled in any graduate program.

All submissions must be sent as e-mail attachments to the Dante Society at *dsadantesociety.org*. Undergraduate essays should be no longer than 5,000 words and graduate essays no longer than 7,000 words. The deadline for submission is June 30.

Each writer should provide a cover page (as the first page of the file) giving the writer's name, local, permanent and e-mail addresses, the title of the essay, the essay category, and the writer's institutional affiliation. The writer's name should not appear on the essay title page (to follow the cover page) or on any other page of the essay since the essays are submitted anonymously to the readers. Quotations from Dante's works should be cited in the original language, and the format of an essay should conform to either the Chicago or MLA Style Sheet guidelines.

Submissions will be judged by a special Committee of the Society. If it should be decided that none of the essays submitted deserves a full prize, the Society may award one prize to two contestants, each to receive one half of the prize, or it may make no award. The results will be announced in early autumn and published in the fall issue of the Society's *Newsletter* and in *Dante Studies*. While the essays remain the intellectual property of the writers, the submitted text will not be returned to authors.

Report of the Acting Secretary

The 130th Annual Meeting of the Dante Society (and the 57th of the incorporated Dante Society of America) was held at the Carriage House of the Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site in Cambridge, Massachusetts on Saturday, May 19, 2012 at 11 a.m. President **Nancy Vickers** introduced National Park Service Ranger **Garrett Cloer**, who welcomed those present and received thanks for the Site's continuing hospitality from all assembled.

The minutes of the 129th Annual Meeting were read and approved.

After the business meeting, the President introduced **Rachel Jacoff**, Margaret and LeRoy Carlson Professor of Comparative Literature Emerita (Wellesley College), who spoke to the members on the subject of "Dante and Rome."

Two other lectures sponsored by the Society took place in 2012. We met on Saturday, January 7, in conjunction with the Modern Language Association Convention in Seattle. **Justin Steinberg** (University of Chicago) spoke on "Naked Pacts and Poems Dressed: Genre, Gender, and Contract Law in Dante." On February 25 we joined both the Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site and the Mount Auburn Cemetery to celebrate not only the 2010 special issue of *Dante Studies* on "Longfellow and Dante" but also Longfellow's 205th birthday. Contributor **Christian Dupont** (Independent Scholar) spoke on "Longfellow and the Legacy of the Dante Club."

In the prize competition for 2011, the Dante Prize for the best undergraduate essay was awarded to **Joshua Fox** (University of Chicago) for "The Winds of the Earthly Paradise: The Importance of Growth without Seed on Earth." The 2011 Charles Hall Grandgent Award for the best essay by a graduate student went to **Julie Van Peteghem** (Columbia University) for "The Vernacular Roots of Dante's Reading of Ovid in the *Commedia*: Two Examples from *Purgatorio*." **Victoria Kirkham** (Chair) and **Albert Ascoli** served as judges.

The Society also sponsored six sessions arranged by Editor Emeritus of *Dante Studies* Christopher Kleinhenz (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

for the Forty-Seventh International Congress on Medieval Studies held May 10–13, 2012 at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.

Dante I. *Dante and Intertextuality*: **Tristan Kay** (Dartmouth College) and **Francesca Southerden** (Wellesley College), Organizers; **Albert Russell Ascoli** (University of California–Berkeley), Chair. **Julie Van Peteghem** (Columbia University): “Contextualizing Ovidian Intertextuality: The Vernacular Roots of Dante’s Reading of Ovid in the *Divina Commedia*.” Kara Gaston (University of Pennsylvania): “Between Text and Gloss in *The House of Fame* and *Inferno* III.” **Laurie Shepard** (Boston College): “Dante, Cavalcanti, and Intertextual Authority.”

Dante II. *Perspectives on Dante’s Paradiso*: Santa Casciani (John Carroll University), Chair. **Francesca Galli** (Università della Svizzera Italiana): “Words of Light: Dante and Bartolomeo di Bologna.” **Francesca Braida** (Université de Paris X Nanterre): “Opacity, Brightness, and Gravity of the Body in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.” Valentina Atturo (La Sapienza Università di Roma): “The Eyes of the Skin: The Fixed Gaze and ‘ad-miratio’ between Richard of St. Victor and Dante.”

Dante III. *Critical Perspectives on Intertextuality in Dante’s Comedy*: **Vincent Polina** (Tufts University), Chair. **Gabriella I. Baika** (Florida Institute of Technology): “The *Testament* of Jean de Meun and its Relationship to the *Divine Comedy*.” **Bridget Pupillo** (Johns Hopkins University): “Geryon, al-Buraq, and the Apocalyptic Monstrous.” **Andrés Amitai Wilson** (University of Massachusetts–Amherst): “Dante’s Chariot: Ezekielian Mimesis in Dante’s Eden.” **Simone Tarud Bettini** (Università di Bologna): “Dante and the Lyrical Tradition: An Example of Intertextuality in the Vernacular, *Purgatorio* XV, 67–75.”

Dante IV. *Politics, Law, Exile, and Community in Dante’s Works*: Christopher Kleinhenz (University of Wisconsin–Madison), Chair. **Laurence Hooper** (University of Chicago): “‘Prendere loro desiderato porto’: Exile and Rhetorical Closure in *Convivio* IV.” **Francesco Aimerito** (Università del Piemonte Orientale): “Medieval Law in Dante’s *Purgatorio*.” Maria Luisa Ardizzone (New York University): “The Small Medieval Community and Its Role in Dante’s Political Thought.”

Dante V. *Interpretive Problems in Dante’s Inferno*: Stan Benfell (Brigham Young University), Chair. **Thomas J. Farrell** (Stetson University): “Unstable Meanings in ‘il piè fermo.’” **Jason Aleksander** (Saint Xavier University): “What’s Wrong with Heresy in *Inferno* X.” **Giuliano Milani** (La Sapienza Università di Roma): “Dante, the Bag and the Pictures.” **Leah Schwebel** (University of Connecticut): “Simile Lordura,” Altra Bolgia: Usurpation through Conflation in *Inferno*.

Dante VI. *Critical Perspectives on Dante’s Purgatorio*: Tristan Kay (Dartmouth College), Chair. **Filippo Gianferrari** (University of Notre Dame): “‘Non vi meravigliate, ma credete’ (*Purgatorio* III, 97): Resurrection Narrative in Ante-Purgatory.” **John Bugbee** (Mount Saint Mary’s University): “Dante’s Staircase

and the Freedom of the Will.” **Stan Benfell** (Brigham Young University): “Defining Virtue in Dante’s *Purgatorio*.” Elizabeth Dolly Weber (University of Illinois–Chicago): “Virgil, Dante, and Confession in the *Commedia*.”

The balloting in the spring of 2012 resulted in the election of **Albert Ascoli** and **Arielle Saiber** to the Council for the three-year term 2012–2015. **Nancy Vickers** was elected Acting Secretary–Treasurer and **Albert Ascoli** was re-elected Vice President, both for the year 2012–2013.

The Council met twice during the academic year 2011–2012: on October 15, 2011 and on May 18, 2012. In October we reviewed in detail the results of our 2010–2011 survey of the membership. We concluded that we should undertake the revision of our By-Laws and discussed how we might address the problem of our untenable administrative structure through the redistribution of tasks among several officers and the redesign of our website (see the spring 2012 *Newsletter* on the DSA website for a full discussion of these major initiatives).

In May, the Council continued the work outlined at the October meeting and reviewed policies pertaining to the Society’s finances. It determined to request that the Treasurer submit for approval a budget for the coming fiscal year at the Council’s fall meeting. It also further advanced the clear division of our Merrill Lynch Endowment Management Account (EMA) into two sub-accounts: cash/operating and investment/quasi-endowment. This step will permit us better to assess both volunteer adherence to Council-approved budgets and investment portfolio performance.

Our Merrill Lynch EMA (the umbrella account comprised of our two sub-accounts) opened fiscal year 2011 at \$223,426 and closed at \$214,267 (a loss of \$9,159 or 4%). Our assets were allocated as follows: equities 45%; fixed income 45%; cash 10%. Our balance has basically remained in the range of \$210,000 to \$240,000 (depending on the timing of our expenses) since the completion of the first phase of our campaign. We did, of course, experience a predictable dip during the 2008–2009 financial crisis. We are thus achieving the preservation of our core assets. Our revenues for FY11 totaled \$17,660 and our expenses totaled \$17,617. Dues constituted our major source of income; the cost of our three yearly meetings (travel and limited entertainment for councilors, members of the Board of Editors of *Dante Studies*, and speakers), our major expense. The Council further proposes to modify the Annual Report for 2013 to include a straightforward summary in greater detail of the audited financial statement.

DANTE STUDIES STYLE SHEET

Guidelines for Authors

[5.14.13]

Dante Studies is the official annual of the Dante Society of America, which was founded in 1881 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, and Charles Eliot Norton (the Society's first three presidents) and others. Like the Dante Society as a whole, *Dante Studies* is dedicated to the furtherance of the study of the works of Dante Alighieri. Its editorial board welcomes submissions, in English or Italian, on all subjects connected with Dante's life, works, influence, and critical reception.

General Remarks

For distinctive treatment of words and phrases, grammar, punctuation, style, and matters of bibliographic citation, consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* (parenthetical numbers below refer to the 15th edition). The following notes highlight major style issues and clarify *DS* preferences where *CMS* offers choices or where *DS* practice deviates from *CMS*. Authors are strongly encouraged to use inclusive language when possible.

Abbreviations

Do not use abbreviations (except parenthetically) in run of text.

In notes, avoid *loc. cit.* and *op. cit.* Use *ibid.* only to refer the reader to a single bibliographic item cited in the immediately preceding note. If more than one work is cited in the previous note, an abbreviated (author-short title) citation should be used.

Capitalization

Certain terms designating historical, political, or cultural movements or periods are traditionally capitalized (e.g., High Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Risorgimento); many such descriptive terms, however, need not be capitalized (e.g., antiquity, the quattrocento) (*CMS* 8.77–8.80). Capitalize adjectives derived from proper nouns that designate cultural movements and styles (e.g., Romanesque) (*CMS* 8.85); otherwise, such terms may be set lowercase.

Capitalize specific Dantean concepts (e.g., Purgatory), but do not capitalize units of topographical structure (e.g., ninth bolgia of the eighth circle).

Capitalize religious and theological concepts (e.g., the Annunciation).

Generic terms designating sections of poems, plays, and the like should be capitalized only when used with figures to cite particular sections (e.g., Canto 23, Book 4 of the *Aeneid*, the eleventh canto). Note that this opposes the recommendation of CMS 8.194, which specifies that such terms be universally lowercase.

Capitalize permanent epithets and personal titles that function as part of the name or can be used in direct address. Titles occurring in apposition that function descriptively (and would not occur in direct address) should not be capitalized. Titles used alone or following a name should be lowercased in run of text (but capitalized in acknowledgments and the like). (CMS 8.21–38)

the bishop of Paris, William of Auvergne

Doctor Angelicus

Fra Remigio de' Girolami, lector of theology at Santa Maria Novella

King George III, *but* the king of England

the Master

Pope Innocent III, the pope

The prefect Acerbo Falseroni of Florence

Capitalize all principal words in French names of buildings (e.g., Opéra-Comique). In the names of associations, institutions, exhibitions, organizations, and the like, capitalize the first substantive only (e.g., la Légion d'honneur). Note that translated names follow English conventions for capitalization; for example, Exposition universelle internationale is rendered as Universal Exposition.

Citations

Archives and Libraries

Use full names for first instance of a given institution, though sigla may be abbreviated:

Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (= Bibl. Naz.) (e.g., Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. [Magliabechiana] 165, fol. 1r)

London, British Library (e.g., London, British Library, MS Add. 19587)

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (= Bib. nat.); Bib. nat. MS Lat. 6064; MS Arabe 384

Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 4072

Edition-Independent Identifying Numbers

Short citations to works by Dante are included parenthetically in running text (and may be used in notes as well): titles—spelled out in text (e.g., *Epistole* 13.10)—are abbreviated as below, with arabic identifying section numbers separated by periods.

Conv. 4.24

Epist. 13.10

Inf. 31.112–14

Mon. 3.4.12

Par. 33.131, 137

Purg. 5.114

VN 4.5

DVE 1.2.4

Works by other authors may be cited similarly after the complete title has been introduced. (For example, Vergil's *Aeneid*, referenced in the text, might be followed by a subsequent parenthetical *Aen.* 1.725). A single reference to a classical or medieval text, however, should not be abbreviated.

Note: Do not use a definite article with a cantica of the *Commedia* (e.g., “In *Inferno*, Dante).

Scripture

Parenthetical references to scripture should use the “traditional” abbreviations (e.g., Gen. 1:14–19) (*CMS* 17.247, 15.51–15.53).

Secondary Literature

There is no need to include a works list in addition to endnotes; however, authors must indicate facts of publication as completely as possible, including, for example, edition of works cited, series information, and so

forth. For place of publication, use English-language equivalents for foreign city names (e.g., Florence, Rome, Vatican, *not* Firenze, Roma, Vaticano). If more than one place is given on the title page, use only the first. After an initial citation, abbreviate to author plus short title for subsequent mentions of the same work.

Use headline style capitalization for titles of English-language books and articles. Within titles, hyphenation of compounds should follow the “traditional” rules noted in *CMS* (8.170).

In general, citations of works in languages other than English may hew to *CMS*’s simple rule for sentence-style capitalization (10.3): “first word of title and subtitle and all proper nouns.” (This applies to titles of French periodicals as well as to titles of articles and books.) For German titles, see *CMS* 10.43. Note that Latin also capitalizes proper adjectives. Punctuation of foreign-language titles may be modified slightly to accord with American practice (e.g., change periods to colons before subtitles).

Contra academicos
De civitate Dei
Storia della letteratura italiana

Some journals follow their own convention:

Studi Danteschi
Lettere Italiane
Quaderni d’Italianistica
Lettere Classensi

Titles within titles. In article citations, titles may be italicized as usual (e.g., “*In Omnibus Viis Tuis*: Compline in the Valley of the Rulers”). Within italicized titles the embedded title may be enclosed in quotation marks. If embedded titles are clearly represented through capitalization, quotation marks are not necessary.

La escatología musulmana en la Divina Comedia.

John Kleiner, *Mismapping the Underworld: Daring and Error in Dante’s “Comedy,”* *Figurae: Reading Medieval Culture* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 153 n. 33. [Note in this example that no

comma comes between the page number and the note number (CMS 17.140).]

Do not italicize an initial “the” in the names of periodicals (the *New York Times*).

In indicating pages, *p.* or *pp.* is omitted unless necessary for clarity. Inclusive page ranges should be compressed according to the scheme summarized below (under “Numbers”).

For Internet citations, do not enclose URLs in angle brackets.

In general, spell out series names in full; however, such well-known abbreviations as *PL* and *PMLA* need not be expanded.

Sample note forms:

EDITIONS

Dante Alighieri, *Commedia*, vol. 1 *Inferno*, ed. Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi. (Milan: Mondadori, 1991).

Gregory, *Moralia in Job* 4.1 (*PL* 75.637–41).

ARTICLES

Charles T. Davis, “Dante’s Vision of History,” *Dante Studies* 118 (2000): 243–59.

Paul Renucci, “Dante et les mythes du Millenium,” *Revue des études italiennes*, n.s., 11 (1965): 393–421. [French journal titles follow sentence-style capitalization]

BOOKS/ /MONOGRAPHS

Helga Scheible, *Die Gedichte in der “Consolatio Philosophiae” des Boethius*, Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften, n.F., 46 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1972).

Adolphe Napoléon Didron, *Iconographie chrétienne: Histoire de Dieu* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1843).

Teodolinda Barolini, *Dante’s Poets: Textuality and Truth in the Comedy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 212–15.

REFERENCE WORKS

The Dante Encyclopedia, s.v. “Forese.”

Italics

Foreign words and phrases not in general usage (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* may be considered a starting point in this regard) should be italicized (e.g., *canzoni*).

Quotations

The *Commedia* is to be quoted according to a standard Italian critical edition of the text. Those of Giorgio Petrocchi (Milan: Mondadori, 1966–67; 2nd ed., 1994) or Federico Sanguineti (Florence: SISMEI, 2001) are currently recommended.

Use a word space on both sides of the solidus (e.g., “la quale è sì ‘invilita, / che ogn’ om par che mi dica: ‘Io t’abandonò,’”).

The journal does not normally include translations of Dante’s Italian texts unless there is a special *ad locum* reason. Extracts from Latin texts, however, should be translated in run of text, with the original text given in notes.

Numbers

In run of text, spell out one through ninety-nine and large round numbers. In sentences including numbers both greater and less than ninety-nine, use figures. Do not use roman numerals in citations.

Dates should be expressed in the form *month day, year*. Decades should be written out in full in figures or as words (the 1330s, *or* the thirties, *but not* the ’30s).

Spell out designations for centuries and unit modifiers composed thereof:

- the fourteenth century; fourteenth-century works
- the early/late fourteenth century; late fourteenth-century works
- the mid to late fourteenth century; mid to late fourteenth-century works
- the mid-1330s, the mid to late 1330s

Inclusive ranges should be compressed according to the scheme offered in CMS 9.64, which may be summarized as follows. Note, however, that for life dates both numbers should be given in full (e.g., 1313–1375, *not* 1313–75).

- The first number is 1–99 or 100, 200, and so on: the second number is given in full (e.g., 4–29, 100–102).
- The first number is 101–109, 201–209, and so on: only the changed element of the second number is given (e.g., 102–3)
- The first number is 110–199, 210–299, and so on: the second number uses two or more digits (e.g., 1234–37, 1290–1321)

Punctuation

Do not use a comma after a short introductory phrase, unless a pause is strongly implied or readability would be adversely affected otherwise:

Thus Dante invites the reader to scrutinize . . .

In 1239 he wrote . . .

In the second book of *Monarchia* Dante . . .

Indeed, he did quite the opposite. . . .

First of all, Dante's admirers . . .

Do use the series comma: *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*.

Do not separate a restrictive term from its neighbor with a comma, but do use a comma to set off nonrestrictive elements.

"In his treatise *Contra falsos ecclesie professores*, which was written about 1305 . . ." (no comma after title, but comma before nonrestrictive clause)

"In the second work written in the 1340s that was composed for his new patron . . ." (there were *two* works written for the new patron, both in the 1340s)

Spelling

Use American spelling. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* may be considered an authority in matters of spelling and hyphenation: where alternative spellings for the same term are given, use the main entry (e.g., "fueled," *not* "fuelled"; "toward" *not* "towards"). For personal names, consult *Webster's New Biographical Dictionary* or the Name Authority Headings of the Library of Congress (<http://authorities.loc.gov/>).

For possessives of singular nouns ending in *s*, including proper nouns, add an apostrophe and an *s*, observing the exceptions noted in CMS 7.20–7.22.

With regard to hyphenation, *DS* favors closing compounds that sometimes appear hyphenated (e.g., preexisting). If uncertain about whether or not to spell a term with or without a hyphen or closed up, check *Merriam-Webster's* first to verify the status of a given term, then apply the principles concerning hyphenation set forth in *CMS* 7.82–7.90. Temporary compounds that as a unit function adjectivally before a noun (unit modifiers) should be hyphenated (e.g., “she found herself engaged in a decision-making process,” *but* “decision making was not her favorite task”).

